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Presented with the Second Volume
herewith, by
Mr. & Mrs. J. K. WADDILOVE.
OAKHURST, MANNINGHAM,
BRADFORD.

OUR OWN ENGLISH BIBLE

THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL TO THE VENERABLE BEDE,
ROKER, SUNDERLAND.

DESIGNED AND CARRIED OUT BY MR. CHARLES C. HODGES, HEXHAM.

(*Photo by Mr. T. P. Edwards, Hexham.*)

OUR OWN ENGLISH BIBLE

ITS TRANSLATORS AND THEIR WORK

THE MANUSCRIPT PERIOD

BY THE

REV. W. J. HEATON, B.D.

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MEMBRE DE L'INSTITUT ET ACADEMIE

WITH FIFTY-SIX FACSIMILES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

SECOND EDITION

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SAMUEL LLOYD, Esq.

AUTHOR OF

"The Corrected English New Testament"

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Life-Governor of the British and

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

In issuing this Second Edition, the author wishes to express his warmest thanks for the cordial way in which the first has been received. They are especially due to the Right Honourable Lord Peckover, LL.D., etc., who has given him the use of his splendid collection of Bibles and Biblical literature ; and presented the first edition to a number of the leading Libraries. We both travelled through the same text-book in the conduct of a Bible-class, where these labours originated, and his high scholarship has made his patronage and friendship a memorable encouragement.

To Lord and Lady William Cecil also the warmest thanks are due, and are hereby presented. Lady Cecil assisted her father, the late Baron Amherst, for years with his magnificent library, of which she said, " It was very complete, from the earliest Manuscripts through every stage of the printed Editions. I can never forget the many, many happy hours I spent with him collating and comparing each precious volume, which he always touched with the gentle finger of a true book lover."

Lady Cecil thought so highly of the present volume that she suggested its purchase to Queen Alexandra. Both she and the Dowager-Queen of Sweden have ordered copies.

I wish to acknowledge also the most gracious help of Professor Skeat. I have often sat at his feet in that great silent room in the British Museum during the forty years

that I have prosecuted these studies, and his recent friendship has been of the greatest assistance. He tells me that the mystery about Ælfric is now cleared up.

It has been decidedly embarrassing to be in doubt as to the identity of such a scholar, Bible Translator, and Homilist. And it is only lately that we have come to feel that we are on sure ground. Professor Skeat has shown quite clearly, however, who the man really was to whom we owe so much. He was no archbishop, but was born about 955, a few years before the commencement of the reign of Edgar. In his *Life of St. Swithun* he refers often to his early days in Winchester, where he became a priest. He was therefore over thirty years old when he was sent to Cerne Abbas in Dorset, where he was a monk, and where, or at Winchester, he wrote many of his works. Then he became Abbot of Eynesham, near Oxford, being elected in 1005. The monastery at Cerne is beautifully situated, and was endowed by the Thane Æthelmœr, to whom he probably owed his promotion to Eynesham or Ensham. Æthelmœr established a fraternity of monks under the Benedictine rule at Cerne in 987, and at Eynesham in 1005, so that Ælfric was the first to have charge of the latter. He had spent many years in the school at Winchester, and evidently profited above many, Professor Skeat speaking of his "amazing industry."

He was a distinct person from Ælfric, Archbishop of Canterbury, who died in 1005, the very year in which our Ælfric was transferred to Eynesham.

And certainly he was distinct from the violent Ælfric Putta, who succeeded Wulfstan as Archbishop of York. A good many things are recorded of him that scarcely suit the gentle scholar, as we see later on. But the true Ælfric will stand on his own merits, and Professor Earle, the well-known authority on Anglo-Saxon literature says—

"It is impossible not to see in Ælfric a man of humble, honest, and upright heart; one born to be a teacher, who simply strove with unflagging industry to do his duty in instructing men in all such truth as he believed to be for their profit. He was a true patriot, and in describing the exploits of Judith and Judas Macabeus against their enemies, his thoughts turned towards the troubles of his own country, then harassed by the Danes. He sets before the laity the best of examples, the stories of martyrs, and saints, and heroes. He was popular and successful, and his Homilies continued to be copied out long after the Norman Conquest."

Æthelmœr, his patron and friend, was the great upholder of Monasticism in the West. Professor Skeat has edited Ælfric's *Lives of the Saints*, and gives an account of eighteen of his principal works. He say the English of the Homilies is splendid, and that it here appears fully qualified to be the medium of the highest learning. As to the identification of the true Ælfric, so long needed, he acknowledges his obligation to an excellent, careful, and exhaustive article by Dr. E. Dietrich, of Marburg, which has left little more to be said on the subject.*

A most valuable volume has lately been issued, however, by S. Harvey Gem, M.A. It is entitled *An Anglo-Saxon Abbot; Ælfric of Eynsham.* He says that home defence (against the Danes then), temperance, and Christian knowledge, amongst all classes, were the three things for which Ælfric's name stands.

The second volume of the present work is now published, and is called *The Bible of the Reformation*, being occupied entirely with the reign of Henry VIII. Next year I hope to complete the series by another on *The Puritan Bible.*

* Niedner's *Zeitschrift*, 1855–56.

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OUR OWN ENGLISH BIBLE

CHAPTER I

THE MANUSCRIPT PERIOD

"There is a history in all men's lives
Figuring the nature of the times deceased."

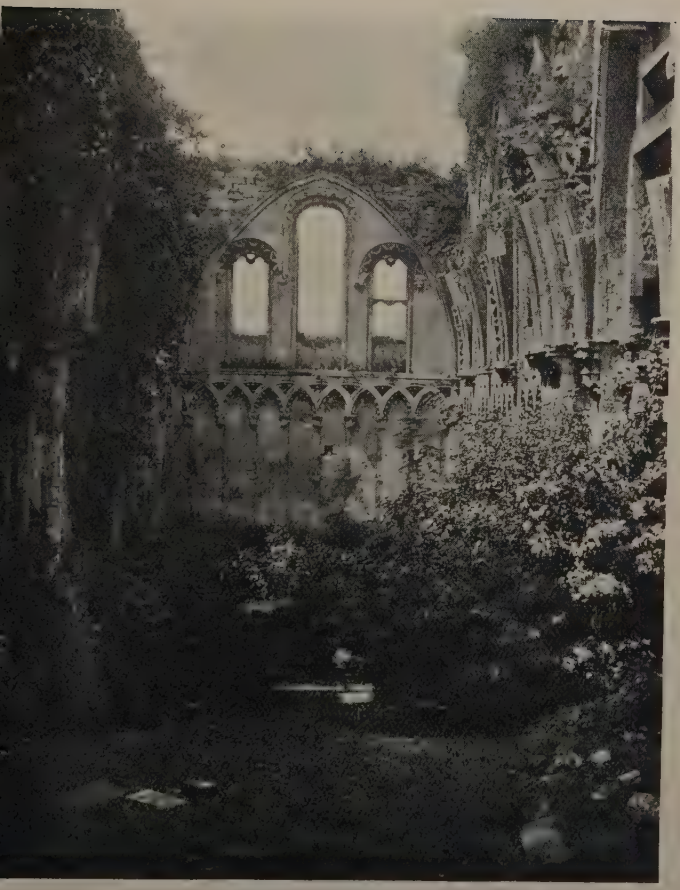
The English Bible is perhaps the greatest concrete force on the side of truth and righteousness which the world contains. Its influence is incalculable, and is growing from age to age. At Oxford alone the presses can work at the rate of a Bible a minute. Multitudes are also printed at Cambridge, London, Edinburgh, and Dublin. At New York, where sixteen steam presses are employed, about 800,000 copies of either whole Bibles or New Testaments are produced every year. The total Bible production in our time is about three thousand a day, or five every minute of working time.

And these Bibles are required. More copies of the Scriptures are demanded in the English tongue than in the languages of all the other nations of the world put together, whilst the number of versions to which this country gives encouragement and assistance is more than a hundred and fifty. The English Bible is amongst the most sumptuous and the cheapest books of the day. Everyone can be suited, from the richest and most literary

to the humblest. As Mr. Stevens has tersely put it, our earliest Bibles on vellum must have each cost the price of a farm; later, they could be had for a cow; but now a morning's milking of a single cow will procure for the milkman a first-class well-bound Bible in his own language.

And this Bible has a wonderful history, woven into the life of the nation as it is inextricably, and revised from time to time, and in our own time once again. The only parallel to the interest thus surrounding a vernacular Bible is supplied by that of Germany, which had twelve editions of several translations before the discovery of America, and fourteen before Luther's celebrated Wartburg Bible. We were slow to avail ourselves of the miracle of printing, insomuch that no English Bible taxed the new art until it had been used for more than two generations. But we soon made up for lost time, and have, ages ago, printed our thousands where others have only had their hundreds. And, dubiously as some of the facts reveal themselves, the windings of the river of the water of life in our own country, connected as they are with some of the most eventful epochs in our national history, are eminently suggestive.

It is in this spirit that we propose to treat the subject. The literary examination of the Text, showing especially our eternal indebtedness to the great martyr-translator, William Tyndale, has been admirably accomplished by Dr. Westcott and Dr. Moulton. And this will always interest the scholar, and may be carried farther still with profit, on the lines indicated by them. But we propose to look upon its external history perhaps in a more leisurely fashion than has yet been attempted; to see how it grew, and what versions preceded it; how far it influenced the religious life of the nation, and sometimes how little; whether it was a sacred power above the battle and above the banner in the long early days when men laid about them at their wills and died; how it wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins until the open sesame of the printer was heard; and how then it slowly worked its



GLASTONBURY ABBEY.

way right into the centre of all Christian teaching, never to be dislodged. English people commonly feel an interest in these things, and it is for them we write.

Of course, before we had the Bible in an English dress at all, the usual manuscripts reached our shores, and were multiplied by hands more or less skilful. No line of the Old Testament ever travelled here until the influence of the New brought it. God spake in time past unto the Fathers

GLASTONBURY.

by the Prophets, but not until in these last days He spoke by His Son did any such message reach our savage and untutored ancestors. And whom Christianity first sent here with any books or parchments we cannot now tell.

On the authority of Sophronius and Theodoret, St. Paul came across to Britain from Gaul after his second imprisonment. Sophronius was Patriarch of Jerusalem in the beginning of the second century, and in a discourse on the merits of the apostles celebrates his preaching of

the Gospel in Spain and Britain. Theodoret was Bishop of Cyprus in the fifth century, and spoke of St. Paul as having brought salvation to the islands of the ocean, and in his first discourse on laws included the Britons amongst the converts of the apostles. Venantius Fortunatus bears similar testimony. He was a French bishop living in the sixth century, and wrote a poem in Latin heroic verse in eulogy of St. Martin, in which the following occurs, as translated by Dr. Alexander:—

> "He crossed the ocean, and where'er he found
> An island-port, he bade the Gospel sound;
> Till British lands and Thule's distant shore
> Had heard the blissful tidings which he bore."

Clement also, the third Bishop of Rome, and possibly fellow-labourer with St. Paul in Philippi, speaks of his travelling to the extreme boundaries of the West, and Jerome says that he imitated the sun in going from one ocean to the other.

Certainly the theory of the great Apostle's advent in Britain cannot be pushed aside as an absurd one, when it is favoured by Usher, Parker, Stillingfleet, Camden, Rapin, and many others.

On the slender authority of Simeon Metaphrastes, St. Peter is said to have preached here. This writer was a lawyer of Constantinople in the ninth century, and he says that Eusebius somewhere narrates that Peter spent twenty-three years at Rome, in Britain, and in cities of the West. This passage no one has ever found, however, and Eusebius distinctly tells us in his extant History that Peter's sphere of apostolic action was in the East. Certainly, there are very early traces of Christianity in the island. Simon Zelotes probably met his death here, and Claudia Rufina, the wife of Aulus Pudens, may have been a British woman. There is a story about Bran, the father of Caractacus, going with his son when he was led captive to Rome, hearing St. Paul preach there, and receiving the truth. Unhappily for this, however, Tacitus, who gives a particular account of the fortunes of Caractacus

in his conflict with the Romans, and who mentions the wife, daughters, and brothers of that prince, says nothing of his father. Nor is it likely that the father would be still living whilst his son was possessed of the chieftainship.

It is highly probable, however, that some attempt would be made to introduce the true faith even in apostolic times. Britain was then governed by Roman viceroys, and was no doubt a frequent topic of conversation among the Prætorian soldiers with whom St. Paul

GLASTONBURY.

lived for some time. The sons of British princes were sent to Rome, both as hostages for the good conduct of their fathers, and to be educated. Seneca, the brother of the Gallio of the Acts, had large possessions in Britain, an indication of not infrequent intercourse. Pomponia Græcina, the wife of Aulus Plautius, the first Roman governor of Britain, was a firm supporter of the Christian Faith.

Among the forty-eight thousand Roman soldiers who

for thirty years constituted the governing power here, succeeded by a number for very many years only one-third less, some were doubtless Christians.* And as in the first generation after the apostles the contents of the Gospel were fixed within their present limits, and at the beginning of the second century the chief portion of the apostolic letters of the New Testament was familiarly known and used by Christians, we may imagine that some New Testaments, or parts of them, would find their way across the water in these early times. The Divine Julius, as Tacitus calls Cæsar, had come all in good time to establish a connection between the Isles of the West and the regions beyond the Alps, the central sphere of the arts, learning, and civilisation of the world.

The Glastonbury legend grew to a portentous size. All the fascination of the spot helped it. The place where King Arthur prayed, where Dunstan ruled, where Eadgar the Giver of Peace, Eadmund the doer of doughty deeds, and the mighty Edmund Ironside had their shrines or their tombs, was naturally looked upon as the original seat of Christianity. The first legend was something like this :—Joseph of Arimathea accompanied the Apostle Philip into the country of the Franks, whence he was ordered by that apostle to pass over into Britain, with twelve disciples. He arrived in A.D. 63, and the king permitted them to take possession of an island covered with wood and surrounded by marshes and brushwood, called by the natives Ynyswitrin. In a vision of the angel Gabriel, they were commanded to erect a church, the lower part of which consisted of a wall of twisted twigs — a shapeless structure indeed, but adorned by manifold manifestations of the power of God.

Then the thing grew to this :—The number of Joseph's attendants was originally six hundred men and women ; of these, the majority having broken a vow that they had taken of abstinence till they should reach the land, were not permitted to cross ; the rest, to the number of one

* Under the Romans there were ninety-two cities in Britain, thirty-three being "conspicuous and celebrated."

hundred and fifty, came over on the shirt of Joseph; the remainder having repented, a ship was despatched for them which had been built by King Solomon; with them came over Nacianus, a prince of the Medes, who had been formerly baptized by Joseph in the city of Sarum, the king of which, Mordraius, also came with them; on arriving, they found Joseph a prisoner to a king of North Wales, whom Mordraius slew, setting Joseph free; they

GLASTONBURY.

then went and preached to the people under King Arviragus, who gave them the island Avalon! Now that Tennyson has covered the place with the glamour of his genius, there is no telling what the legend might have grown to, but for the incredulity of the age. This is the Avilion of King Arthur, of which he says—

> "Where falls not rain, or hail, or any snow,
> Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
> Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard lawns
> And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,
> Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

As for Philip being with Joseph of Arimathea, authentic traditions tell us that he laboured in Phrygia, and died and was buried at Hierapolis. There may have been someone called Joseph, who first brought the Gospel to those parts. Then, as the place grew in fame, "Joseph" was not quite important enough for its founder, so he was made Joseph of Arimathea. No doubt Glastonbury received the truth in the very early time, and Lappenburg is possibly right in saying that the first tidings of the new Faith may not have come from Rome at all, but from one of those Congregations in Asia Minor which the Mediterranean had long kept in connection with Gaul. The Romans were not our first civilisers, by any means. The Phœnicians came here for articles of commerce six hundred years before the Christian era, running upon shoals and suffering shipwreck sometimes, if pursued, rather than discover the track by which others might come to share so lucrative a connection.

So we must leave the matter still a question and a doubt, as Wordsworth does.

> "Wandering through the West,
> Did holy Paul a while in Britain dwell,
> And call the fountain forth by miracle,
> And with dread signs the nascent stream invest:
> Or he whose bonds dropped off, whose prison doors
> Flew open, by an angel's voice unbarred;
> Or some of humbler name to these wild shores
> Storm-driven, who, having seen the cup of woe
> Pass from their Master, sojourned here to guard
> The precious current they had taught to flow!"

Britain may mean a separated part, and we were doubly separated from Europe, by the Channel and our savagery. But let us continue to sail in these uncertain seas, though we may often be reminded of Camden's words: "Who is so skilful that, struggling with time in the foggy dark sea of antiquity, may not sometimes run upon the rocks!"

CHAPTER II

EARLY DISSEMINATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

"It is the Book of God. What if I should say '*God of books!*'"
G. HERBERT.

WHATEVER legends there may be, no doubt the truth was received here in the earliest times. The testimony is abundant. Gildas says it was introduced before the defeat of Boadicea. No public mission was sent indeed, nor any general attempt made to convert the natives, but one writer of established reputation after another speaks of our early Christianity in unmistakable terms. Origen, early in the third century, says: "The power of God our Saviour is even with them which in Britain are divided from our world." Tertullian, his contrast in most things, agrees with him in this, and says, at the end of the second century, or at the beginning of the third: "In whom other than in the Christ, who has already come, do all the nations believe? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, those who inhabit Mesopotamia, Armenia, Phrygia, Cappadocia, the dwellers in Pontus, Asia and Pamphylia, those occupying Egypt, and inhabiting the region of Africa beyond Cyrene, Romans and natives; even Jews, dwelling in Jerusalem and other nations, nay, the different Tribes of Getulians, and many territories of the Moors; all parts of Spain, the different peoples of Gaul, and parts of Britain not reached by the Romans, but subjugated to Christ . . . in all these the name of the Christ, who has already come, reigns" (*Adv. Judæos*, c. vii.).

A noble testimony to be given to the power of the truth

against the many and the mighty, at such an early period, for we were probably least as well as last.

Eusebius, the Church historian, living in the early part of the fourth century, is also said to assert that some of the apostles "crossed the ocean to those islands called British," and there won trophies for Christ. He wrote the life of the Emperor Constantine (who was crowned in Britain), and was allowed every facility for examining the public archives by him.

Jerome and Chrysostom bear similar testimony in the fourth century. Jerome, who lived so long in his cell at Bethlehem, and thus was fitted to speak in such a way, says: "The Britons who live apart from our world, if they go on pilgrimage, will leave the Western parts and seek Jerusalem, known to them by fame only, and by the Scriptures."

And from the golden-tongued Chrysostom we have the following: "The British Isles situate beyond our sea, and lying in the very ocean, felt the power of the Word, for churches and altars were even there erected. How often in Britain did men eat of the flesh of their own kind; now they refresh their souls with fasting." Irenæus also (A.D. 115 to 190) mentions the existence of churches amongst the Celtic nations, but we must remember that this term was applied to the inhabitants of Western Europe generally.

If the story of Lucius, a Christian British king of the second century, is, as Dr. Alexander says, "the dream of a dream, and the shadow of a shade," it is almost certain that British bishops appeared in the Synods of the fourth century at Arles, Sardica, and Rimini. At the time of the bitter persecution of Diocletian also, the great "book-burner" sent his agents here, and Gildas bears his testimony that parts of the Scriptures were burnt in the streets of British towns. Alban and others were added to the noble army of martyrs; and Constantine the Great, who brought all the persecutions to an end, was here saluted as Emperor at the old Roman town of Silchester, being the son of a British princess, Helena. One other distinction we had

in these early times, the giving birth to a famous heretic. The real name of Pelagius was Morgan, and he was a native of Wales, and a man of much learning and blameless character. His doctrines spread far and wide, and were answered by Augustine, giving rise to the greatest controversy of that time. Bede, though his fellow-countryman, has no mercy on Pelagius, and quotes Prosper's gentle lines—

> "A scribbler vile, inflamed with hellish spite,
> Against the great Augustine dared to write.
> Presumptuous serpent! from what midnight den
> Durst thou to crawl on earth, and look at men?
> Sure thou wast fed on Britain's sea-girt plains,
> Or in thy breast Vesuvian sulphur reigns!"

So that to the great and first Augustine we supplied an antagonist, whilst from his namesake, two hundred years later, we afresh received the Gospel, after a century and a half of Saxon devastation.*

We see then our calling and position in these early times very clearly. Christianity was aggressive and missionary, and we were the savages which the far-reaching influence of the Gospel gloried over as amongst its most conspicuous trophies. If there had been missionary meetings of modern type, we should have filled up a place largely answering to that of the converted South Sea Islanders of the nineteenth century. Almost the last that Rome cared to conquer, almost the first that she flung away, isolated from even the rough civilisation of Gaul, our conversion, very partial as it was, answered somewhat to that of the Fijians of our time. The Roman mythology accompanied the Roman arms doubtless. In Scotland stood a temple to Mars; in Cornwall one to Mercury; at Bangor to Minerva; at Maldon to Victoria; at Bath to Apollo; at Leicester to Janus; and at York to Bellona. London had two. On the site of St. Paul's, tradition places a

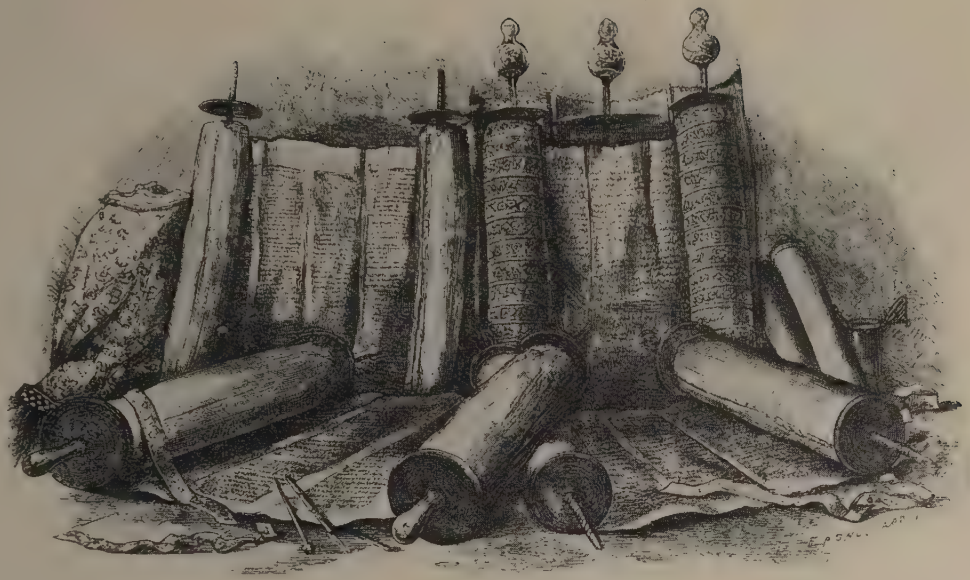
* Pelagius was a writer of force and eloquence, as a matter of fact, and though Augustine strongly opposed him, he wrote to him as "the most beloved lord and most desired brother." The name Pelagius used to be regarded as a mere translation of the Welsh Morgan, but this is now doubted.

temple to Minerva, and where the Abbey rears its venerable pile, one to Apollo. Some of these heathen temples may have been afterwards converted into Christian churches, as was common.

How far the Bible was instrumental in effecting the change, it is, of course, impossible to say, but we have a great number of testimonies to the rapid multiplication of portions of the Scriptures in the earliest centuries of Christianity.

Chrysostom says that the abundance of Bibles turned barbarians into philosophers, and that every encouragement was offered to their perusal. "The grace of the Spirit so ordered it," he answers an objector by saying, "that the Scriptures should originally be composed by publicans, fishers, tentmakers, shepherds, and private men, that none of the ignorant and unlearned might have this excuse of difficulty to fly to; that the handy-craftsman, the servant, and the most illiterate among men might reap benefit." An argument follows why business men should read God's Word in secret: "Remember the Ethiopian treasurer who, though he was a barbarian, and understood not what he read, yet read for all that, sitting in his chariot. If he would not omit reading it in the time of a journey, much less would be omit it when he sat quietly in his house." In one of his sermons on Lazarus, he says again: "The reading of the Scriptures is our great guard against sin. Our ignorance of them is a dangerous precipice and a deep gulf."

Theodoret, Chrysostom's disciple, speaks of a wide diffusion of the Scriptures in his day, saying, "You may commonly see that our doctrine is known not only of them that are the Doctors of the Church, but also even of the tailors, and smiths, and weavers, and of all artificers, yea, and further also even of women, and that not only of them that be learned, but of labouring women, of sewsters, and servants, and handmaids; not only the citizens, but also the country folks do very well understand the same. You may find even the very ditchers and delvers and cowherds and gardeners, arguing of the Holy Trinity,



ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS AND SYNAGOGUE ROLLS.

and of the creation of all things."* Numbers wrote for a living in the early centuries, and books were comparatively cheap and numerous. In the Augustan age in Rome a body of trained scribes could issue a hundred copies of a book in almost as short a time as type can now be set up, proofs revised, and the sheets printed. In one hour, twenty copies of a book of Martial, containing five hundred and forty lines, were issued. Pliny says that Regulus had a thousand copies of his son's life transcribed, and a copy of Horace was to be bought probably for the same price as the last volume of Tennyson or Browning. Andrews Norton thinks that, by the end of the second century, every fifty Christians would have a copy of at least the Gospels, and it is certain that the translation of the Scriptures into the mother tongue was carried out extensively at this period. The Syrians, the Egyptians, the Indians, the Persians, the Ethiopians, and others had them. Chrysostom himself prepared an Armenian version, and Jerome a Dalmatic, Ulphilas a Gothic, and Methodius a Sclavonic.

Jerome, indeed, who gave the Church of Rome its cherished Vulgate, had little idea of the Word of God being locked up in Latin for ever. He translated many portions of it for Eustachia and Paula, and in a letter to another friend urged the "reading now of one book and now of another to increase herself in virtue." Constantine, after giving himself up to the reading of the inspired oracles in his palace, ordered Eusebius to provide fifty copies of the Scriptures, to be written on prepared skins by skilled scribes, well acquainted with their craft, for use in the service of the Churches in the new capital, called after himself *Constantinople*. Shortly after this, the Canon of Scripture was fixed for the first time at the Council of Laodicea (A.D. 363), which, though a subordinate Council, had its decrees fully ratified and generally accepted by the early Church. Erasmus, in the Preface to his Paraphrase, quotes Anastasius Sinaita (A.D. 561), giving this reason for the impossibility of the Scriptures

* Willet's Synopsis.

being corrupted, that the Gospels were translated into the languages of seventy-two nations. It was not till later that books became rare, owing in part to the destruction of libraries in the violence of barbarian warfare. By the seventh century, the deposit of a handsome book had come to be a most valuable security, and formidable anathemas were denounced to protect a manuscript from being alienated or purloined. In the ninth century, in the diocese of Lisieux in France, there was not a single copy of the Old or New Testaments to be found.

We had no early version, however, and how far the Latin tongue came to be known amongst our ancestors cannot be said. Julius Agricola is famous for his care that the sons of the principal Britons should be taught the liberal sciences, and though at first disliking all such studies, they came at length to excel in them. We certainly have some significant tokens of the New Testament being known amongst the people. For instance, when Germanus and Lupus came from France to suppress Pelagianism, there was a public discussion at St. Albans, to which a great multitude came, the only authority appealed to being the New Testament. This was only a short time before the coming of the Saxons, and Bede gets quite excited about it. "On the one side," he cries, "was Divine faith, on the other human presumption; on the one side piety, on the other pride. . . . The venerable Prelates poured forth the torrent of their Apostolical and Evangelical eloquence. Vanity was convinced, and perfidiousness confuted. The people who were judges could scarcely refrain from violence, but signified their judgment by their acclamations."

Of Archbishop David also, reputed uncle to King Arthur, we are told that he privately studied the Scriptures ten years before he would presume to teach, and always carried the Gospels about with him.

So if we do not know who brought the Word of God into Britain, we may be tolerably certain that it was here very early. We cannot tell who took it into Africa, and originated the Churches in that land which afterwards

became so distinguished. We know nothing of its introduction into Gaul, and with regard to even Italy itself, the stories Rome would have us accept are as doubtful as any in a monkish chronicle. But certainly we had both the truth and its witnesses quite early, and as Dr. Alexander has said, "the multitude of the isles saluted their King, and the rugged tones of Britain were not unheard, mingling in the triumphant chorus, and losing their harshness in its manifold harmony."

CHAPTER III

THE TRUTH BANISHED AND DESTROYED SOON AFTER ITS RECEPTION

"But Heaven's high will
Permits a second and a darker shade
Of Pagan night. Afflicted and dismayed
The relics of the sword flee to the mountains;
O wretched land! whose tears have flowed like fountains;
Whose arts and honours in the dust are laid,
By men yet scarcely conscious of a care
For other monuments than those of earth;
Who, as the fields and woods have given them birth,
Will build their savage fortunes only there;
Content, if foss and barrow and the girth
Of long drawn rampart witness what they were."

WORDSWORTH.

If we are curious to know the appearance of the books which were making their way and claiming their place in this early period, we must think of a lawyer's parchment, more or less beautifully embellished. All sorts of things have been used, indeed, as materials on which to write: plates of lead and copper, the bark of trees, bricks, stone, wood, the leaves of palm and other trees, the Egyptian papyrus, the skins of goats and sheep, linen, silk and horn. The verses of Hesiod, the earliest Greek poet, were written on tables of lead, the laws of Solon on wooden planks.

There is an early copy of the Pentateuch, in the Public Library at Cambridge, which is written on thirty-seven skins dyed red; another in the British Museum is on forty thick brown skins. Perhaps the commonest

ancient method was to take such skins, and make a length sometimes as great as fifty yards by about a yard and a half wide, and keep it rolled up on a stick, so called "volume"—rolled up. The wood of the beech tree was also in use at a later time, the word book—Saxon *boc*—meaning a beech tree.

Doubtless the first portions of the Word of God which were circulated here were vellum or parchment manuscripts, so that some that belong to the Saxon period are legible and usable to-day, though more than a thousand years old. It is a mercy paper was not invented. Paper made from rags was not known until the twelfth century, though a kind of paper, called *Charta bombycina*, was in use some time before.

Very little need be said about the Druids and their dark doings, which were superseded, as the higher truths came to be known. The way was somewhat prepared, according to Origen, by the Druidical teaching of one God, but with this monotheism was blended wild polytheism and stupid superstition, belief in Hesus, Tentates, the mistletoe, the snake egg, etc. No doubt their religious system had its birthplace on the Plain of Shinar, for, as the Celtic tribes, originally a branch of the Japhetic stock, moved Westwards, they carried with them, to some extent, the social institutions and the traditionary faith of the patriarchs. The former was corrupted into clanship and vassalage, and the latter into the superstitions of the Druids, which came to be full of monstrous idols, almost surpassing the very devilish devices of Egypt, with deformed, terrible countenances. What we know about them is gathered from stray notices in Latin and Greek writers, and from some few reminiscences in old Irish songs. The dark oak groves were their temples, and human sacrifices were offered up with peculiar cruelty. The Druids were the teachers and poets, the prophets and sorcerers, the judges and priests of the people, and were divided into classes — bards, vates, and Druids

proper, of which the last ranked first. The conflict between Druidism and Christianity appears to have been long and severe, but very little is known about the matter except that the true Faith was completely victorious, and thus the one system coming from the East was superseded by another. Stonehenge is perhaps naturally looked upon as the great British survival of the early superstition, though it is doubtful whether it had anything to do with it.

Not only did the Druids disappear, however, but the Roman occupation came to an end. Briton was left as a derelict ship, abandoned of her crew, and Saxon freebooters swept over the land in their place, doing the work of savages here just as it was done in Rome itself by Alaric, Genseric, and Attila. The marks of civilisation and Christianity began to rapidly disappear. "High towers, fair temples, goodly theatres, strong walls, rich porches, princely palaces, large streets, brave houses, sacred sepulchres, sure gates, sweet gardens, stately galleries, wrought with fair pillars and fine imageries"—nearly all was swept away by the ruthless hands of the new invaders, and Christianity, with whatever books it had, was driven into Cornwall, Wales, and Strathclyde. We never entirely lost the Faith, indeed, after its preaching in or just after the apostolic age. As Fuller says, "The lamp once lit went not out by night, neither by the night of ignorance, nor of security, nor of persecution." A very miserable condition we dropped down to, however; for, as the same quaint writer says, "He who expects a flourishing Church in a fading Commonwealth, let him try whether one side of his face can smile when the other is pinched." Milton draws a dreadful picture of the condition of the country after the Saxon invasion, saying that there was a complete subversion of truth and justice in the minds of most, "scarce the least footstep or impression of goodness being left." Our Saxon ancestors were simply Aryan barbarians, loving war partly for war's sake, and partly for its plunder, but

STONEHENGE, RESTORED AFTER DR. STUKELEY.

without any love for the arts and pursuits of peace. In vain some of the Britons sought refuge within the walls of their churches, for their rage burnt fiercest against everything of the sort. The British called them wolves, dogs, whelps from the kennel of barbarism, hateful to God and man. They had plenty of rude valour, indeed, and the Romans dreaded them above all others, because their movements were so sudden. Symmachus once provided about thirty of them, after a victory, for the shows at Rome, but the day they were to be brought into the theatre, they all strangled themselves. They believed themselves to be the descendants of Wodin, and had the usual barbaric superstitions, which have had strength enough to leave their mark on our familiar words of to-day. If the famous Arthur of romance ever had an existence, neither he nor any other could permanently hinder their occupation of the country, which they effected by fire and sword. Under these circumstances, it was not likely that the conquered would have much influence over the conquerors, with regard to any Faith whatever. Bede, quoting Gildas, upbraids the Britons for never giving the Saxons the means of conversion; but Milton says more reasonably, "How far to blame they were, and what hope there was of converting in the midst of so much hostility, is not now easy to determine." Certainly, it was a complete conquest, though it took a long time to achieve, and those who achieved it scarcely answered to the typical idea of the murderous, ruthless warrior. We are prone to think that such horrible deeds as theirs would be better matched by the dark and melancholy physiognomies of Asia and Africa than the fair, blue-eyed, pleasing countenances of our Saxon ancestors. But every good propensity had been perverted by their direful customs, their acquired passions, and their barbarous training, however nature had supplied them with the germs of those more amiable qualities which have become the national characteristics of their descendants. Mr. Sharon Turner wisely moralises

on this, and exclaims: "So ductile is the human capacity that there is no colour, climate, or constitution which governs the moral character so permanently as the good or evil habits and discipline to which it is subjected."

CHAPTER IV

THE BIBLE SOON IN ITS PLACE AGAIN—AUGUSTINE AND HIS MISSION

"Christ said not to His first discipleship,
Go forth and preach impostures to the world;
But gave them truth to build on; and the sound
Was mighty on their lips; nor needed they
Beside the Gospel, either spear or shield
To aid them in their warfare for the faith."

DANTE.

BEFORE the Saxons had finished conquering and taking possession, the Gospel conquered them. Just

EBBS FLEET.

where Hengist had landed at Ebbs Fleet, off the isle of Thanet, with all the rude early apparatus of

war, there landed Augustine a century and a half later, with the message and the instruments of peace and goodwill.

And amongst these instruments was probably a Bible, others coming soon afterwards. When the Pope sent Augustine his pall, the little addition to his dress which marked the dignity of an archbishop, he sent a number of manuscripts. Wanley gives the catalogue, from which we extract the following:—

1. A Bible, adorned with some leaves of a purple and rose colour, in two vols., which were extant in the time of James I.
2. The Psalms, with the Creed, Paternoster, and several Latin Hymns.
3. Two copies of the Gospels, with the ten Canons of Eusebius prefixed.*
4. Another Psalter, with Hymns.
7. An Exposition of the Epistles and Gospels, which had on the cover a large beryl, surrounded with crystals.

Augustine also brought Gregory's "Pastoral Care," which King Alfred afterwards translated.

Here then we are on solid ground, though of course the Scriptures were all locked up in Latin, and were thus books simply for the missionary priests who came chanting and preaching to the king and queen sitting on the green down between Ramsgate and Minster. It is a romantic story altogether, this second invasion of England by Rome, successful like the first. Gregory, surnamed the Great,

* The identical volumes are most likely those now to be seen in the Bodleian Library (D. 2. 14. 857) and at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge (286). Wanley searched the kingdom for MSS., and is of this opinion. They contain Anglo-Saxon entries a thousand years old, connecting them with St. Augustine's monastery at Canterbury. The drawings with which they are ornamented are, of course, the most ancient monuments of Roman pictorial art in the country, scarcely yielding to those of the Vatican Virgil and Terence.—WESTWOOD.

ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH, CANTERBURY.

whilst still a monk, saw some Saxon boys for sale in the market-place at Rome one day. He was a mixture of the ascetic and the wit, belonging to a distinguished family, having used all his immense wealth to found Benedictine monasteries, in one of which he fasted so much as to endanger his life. As for the boys that attracted him, there were three of them, and they possibly formed part of the spoil taken in the wars incessant at that time, and had been brought from the public market in London. Gregory was struck with their fair and handsome looks, and inquired whence they had come. Rome often amused itself by describing England as cut off from the whole world, and approaching the frozen and half-fabled Thule, but when he heard that they came from the land of the Angles, he gave it quite another turn, exclaiming, "It suits them well; they have angel faces, and ought to be the co-heirs of the angels in heaven." Then finding that they came from Deira, in the northern part of England, "De ira!" he cried. "Yes, they should be delivered from the wrath of God." Another pun he founded on the name of their King Ella, his enthusiasm bursting out in "Hallelujah! the praise of the creating Deity must be sung in these regions!"

It was no mere punning and funning.

He would have come as a missionary to England almost at once, if he had not been positively stopped by the then Pope, and when he became Pope himself, he resolved that the mission should be set about, and on a large scale. His motives were of the highest and purest, though doubtless he could not altogether shut out from his mind the glory that would accrue from such a mission, if successful. Rome was in a pitiful plight, perhaps touching the bottom of her decline and fall just at that time. This is Gibbon's description of what she had sunk to:—

"Amidst the arms of the Lombards, and under the despotism of the Greeks, we again inquire into the fate of Rome, which had reached, about the end of the sixth century, the lowest period of her depression. The surrounding parts were reduced to the state of a dreary

wilderness, in which the land is barren, the waters are impure, and the air is infectious. Curiosity and ambition no longer attracted the nations to the Capital of the World; but, if chance or necessity directed the steps of a wandering stranger, he contemplated with horror the vacancy and solitude of the City, and might be tempted to ask, 'Where is the Senate, and where the people?' From time to time the Tiber rushed with irresistible violence into the valleys of the Seven Hills. A pestilential disease arose from the stagnation of the deluge, and so rapid was the contagion that eighty persons expired in an hour in the midst of a solemn procession which implored the mercy of Heaven. A society in which marriage is encouraged and industry prevails soon repairs the accidental losses of pestilence and war; but, as the far greater part of the Romans were condemned to hopeless indigence and celibacy, the depopulation was constant and visible, and gloomy enthusiasts might expect the approaching failure of the human race."

Certainly, it was a brave deed to attempt the conversion of Saxon England at such a time, and an eternal argument in favour of Foreign Missions. Mr. Kemble exclaims that it was as heroic as when Scipio marched for Zama, and left the terrible Carthaginians thundering at the gates of the city. And at first the missionaries had not the necessary heroism, and turned back home, daunted by the difficulties of the way, and their fears of worse things still. Gregory encouraged them, however, and they came on, being no less than forty in number. The way was prepared for their labours by the influence of Queen Bertha. She was a Christian, and was only allowed to marry Ethelbert on condition that she had the free exercise of her religion. Luidhard, Bishop of Soissons, came over with her, though there is no trace of his having met with any further success.

The order of Italian Benedictines, to which Augustine and his followers belonged, had only recently been founded amid the fastnesses of Monti Cassino. Such an enterprise was a great change to them after their "narrowing convent

AUGUSTINE BEFORE ETHELBERT AND BERTHA.

walls," where they had led lives marked out by lines that could not bend, content with the "daily pacings to and fro, the gray set life." They were not morbid men, however, believing in discipline, but without carrying it too far. They taught the poor children around them, copied priceless manuscripts both on sacred and secular subjects, and lived lives of industry, mostly safe from the robber barons of the day. They were received by Ethelbert and Bertha in the open air, for fear of possible spells and charms; and as nothing uncanny happened, and their words seemed good, they were permitted to come on to Canterbury, and take up their residence there. As soon as they settled down, they built barns and sheds for cattle side by side with their newly erected churches, and opened schools in the immediate neighbourhood, where the youth were taught reading as well as the formulas of their Faith. It was A.D. 597 when they came, a hundred and fifty years after the last Roman had sailed away, but the Church of St. Martin, built during their occupation was still there, and had been used by Queen Bertha as her Oratory. This they took possession of, and before long the king was converted, and many more. He was the third Bretwalda, or dominant king, and Bede says he had extended his dominions right up to the Humber, by which the Southern Saxons were divided from the Northern, so that his conversion had far-reaching results.

As for Gregory, to whom all was owing under God, he took the deepest interest in the mission throughout, and was a man we English folk may well delight to honour. The unanimous suffrages of the Papal electors, the voice of the people, and the decision of the Civil Powers forced him from his quiet life, and obliged him to assume the triple mitre. On his elevation, he adopted the title of servant of the servants of Jesus Christ, and distinguished himself, amongst other things, by the earnestness with which he urged the reading of the Scriptures. These he compared to a river, in some places so shallow that a lamb might pass, and in others so deep that an elephant might be drowned. "They seem to expand and rise

in proportion as those who read them increase in knowledge. Understood by the most illiterate, they are always new to the most learned."

> "No age so young, no wit so small,
> Which Scripture doth not fit;
> There's milk for babes, and yet withal
> There's meat for stronger wit."

Writing to a physician, he represents the Word of God as an Epistle addressed by the Creator to His creatures; and as no one would disregard such an honour from his prince, wherever he might be, and whatever might be his engagements, but would be eager to examine its contents, so ought we never to neglect the Epistle sent to us by the Lord of angels and men. He not only used persuasions but adduced examples, and particularly referred to the conduct of a poor paralytic man who lived at Rome, called Servulus, who, unable himself to read, purchased a Bible, and by entertaining religious persons whom he engaged to read to him, and at other times persuading his mother to perform the same office, had learned the Scriptures by heart; and who, when he came to die, discovered his love to them by obliging his attendants to sing psalms with him.

Certainly he was far from the typical Pope of later times; and writing to the Bishop of Alexandria, he said that the bishoprics of Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome were equally apostolical, since they were all held by Peter. "If you give me more than my due, you rob yourself. If I am named Pope, you own yourself to be no Pope. Let no such thing be named between us. My honour is the honour of the universal Church. I am honoured in the honour paid to my brethren."

The last letter Gregory ever wrote, addressed to Theodelinda, Queen of the Lombards, discovers, by the presents with which it was accompanied, his love for the Scriptures and their diffusion. "I send," says he, "to the Prince Adoaldus, your son, a cross, and a book of the Gospels, in a Persian box, and to your daughter three rings, desiring

ST. AUGUSTINE'S CROSS, NEAR THE SITE OF
ST. AUGUSTINE'S SERMON.

you to give them these things with your own hand, to enhance the value of the present."

And, though already tainted with some error, the truth which Rome dispensed in the sixth century was mainly that which we now hold. Her errors are all dated. Transubstantiation was never broached until England had been reconverted, and it took more than four centuries to settle, until at last it was adopted by the fourth Lateran Council in A.D. 1215. So with one thing after another that is distinctively Papal, the claim of "semper eadem" being a highly absurd one, in the light of history. It cannot be denied, indeed, that there was some taint already. The Gospel had to fight its way in Rome through the old prejudices of the City, and it was a maxim of some of its early promoters to do as little violence to these prejudices as possible. Barnabas might be confounded with Jupiter, and Paul with Mercurius. St. Peter stood at the gate instead of Cardea; St. Rocque or St. Sebastian in the bedroom instead of the Phrygian Penates; St. Nicholas was the Sign of the Vessel instead of Castor and Pollux! Doctrines also were affected, Gregory himself establishing some belief in Purgatory, though without the blasphemous additions which practically led to the Reformation.

But, in the main, it was the truth that we received, and we see how great was Gregory's solicitude that the Scriptures should be known and prized. England was no such prize then, though kings, from the first, became the nursing fathers that prophecy had spoken of. Once when a panic came by reason of a plague, it was attempted to revive the old idolatry, and there was very little reference to Rome at first. It was pestilential, and the Alps were formidable, and often fatal to travellers. The seas, too, were full of danger. It was a weary way from Calais to Marseilles, one of the usual routes, and, as Mr. Blunt says, "If the political aspect of things rendered a Mayor suspicious somewhere, it might be worse than a weary way."

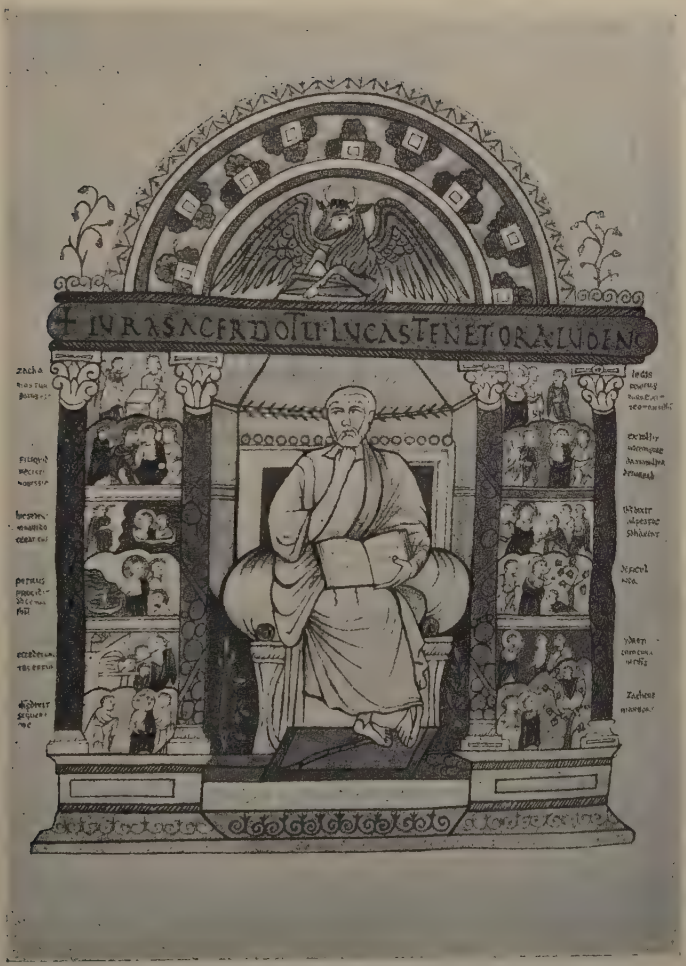
So things were left to shape themselves very largely, without a great deal of reference to Rome, both good and

evil coming of this, and we may sing Wordsworth's ode without much misgiving :—

> "For ever hallowed be this morning fair,
> Blest be the unconscious shore on which ye tread,
> And blest the silver cross, which ye instead
> Of martial banner in procession bear;
> The cross preceding Him who floats in air,
> The pictured Saviour! by Augustine led
> They come and onward travel without dread,
> Chanting in barbarous ears a tuneful prayer,
> Sung for themselves and those whom they would free;
> Rich conquest waits them :—the tempestuous sea
> Of ignorance that ran so rough and high,
> And heeded not the voice of clashing swords,
> These good men humble by a few bare words,
> And calm with fear of God's Divinity."

We shall see later on, however, that the real influence of the "life-full Word" in our country was due far more to Iona than Canterbury. Augustine himself also was not a man to be specially proud of, representing as he did some of the worst faults of Rome. He drew back from his enterprise at the beginning; he claimed additional power over his companions from Gregory; he had to be warned that he was not to be puffed up by the wonders which had been wrought in Britain; he treated the remnant of British Christians in Wales with haughty severity, and uttered a malediction against them which sanctioned, if it did not instigate, their massacre later on. Dean Stanley, indeed, who, as Canon of Canterbury, would naturally look at him in the most favourable light, acknowledges that he was often thinking of himself or his Order when we should have wished him to be thinking of the great cause he had in hand, and that he was not a man of any great elevation of character.*

* *Historical Memorials of Canterbury.*



SAINT LUKE, FROM THE GOSPEL-BOOK OF ST. AUGUSTINE, NOW AT CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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CHAPTER V

CÆDMON

"The Word which they had longed to hear,
Had come at last, the life-full Word,
Which they had often almost heard
In some deep silence of the breast;
For with a sense of dim unrest,
That Word unborn had often wrought,
And struggled in the womb of thought;
And lo, it now was born indeed;
Here was the answer to their need."

R. C. TRENCH.

"We should regard St. Columba and his associates with a reverence which we should refuse to personages merely historic; inasmuch as there can be no just comparison between the regenerator and the destroyer of a people; between the enlightened missionary and the conqueror."—LARDNER.

WE must turn now in quite a new direction to discover the genesis of the first vernacular paraphrase or poem based on the Scriptures, for this is all that Cædmon's work can be called, though sometimes spoken of as a translation. So far we have been occupied mainly with the South of England, but we must go to the North for the first effort of this kind, and we shall find that we owe it, not to Augustine, or any of those who preceded him, but to Columba, Chief and Saint, and by a direct spiritual genealogy to St. Patrick and Ireland.

The story of Patrick's life is that of a Heaven-sent and successful missionary. Whether he belonged to Brittany, Scotland, or Cumberland is doubtful,* but

* The probabilities are in favour of his being born at Dumbarton in 360. He was a Roman citizen of some rank.

he was taken captive in one of the frequent piratical excursions made by the Irish, and being sold as a slave, was employed in herding sheep, under the name of Succat. He was about sixteen years old, a thoughtful youth, and his meditative habits were deepened as he spent his days by mountain track and forest glade. At about the age of manhood he escaped, and began at once to devote himself to such learning as was attainable, studying, to prepare himself for Christian labour, in the College of the Lateran, at Lerins on the Tuscan Sea; and at Auxerre in Gaul, under Germanus.

Ireland was at that time in a miserable condition. Those who speak of its ancient glories must know that they had not yet begun. Instead of one king, bearing sway from the Giant's Causeway to Cape Clear, there were five separate kingdoms, always jealous of each other, and perpetually at war. Tribute was paid in kind; and this amongst a people who carry arms, and are high of heart and hot of head, is only another name for frequent bloody squabbles. So it was kingdom against kingdom, sept against sept, brother against brother, and even son against father perpetually.

Ireland suffered from the misfortune of never having been conquered by Rome, and Christianity had so far failed to reach it. Elsewhere the true Faith was no sooner preached than it had its converts, but Ireland remained the prey of the bigoted Heathen and the abode of the deluded or coerced Heathen for centuries after the truth had become known in the other parts of Europe. Patrick had seen its condition, and applying himself for more than twenty years to learning, he then asked the Pope for permission to preach to those who had formerly captured and enslaved him. The required sanction was given at once, and with a few monks he landed at Ulster, after an absence of about a quarter of a century.

The mission was one of the most successful on record. At first doubted, and almost driven back to their vessels, they rapidly won their way, until in a very short time

idols and idol worship became hateful to the people, the Christian doctrines were received, and churches and monasteries arose, where the flames had but recently devoured the victims of superstition.*

This was all in the middle of the fifth century, Patrick's work in Ireland being nearly contemporaneous with the Saxon invasion in England. Whilst the Saxons were driving the Faith into the corners of our land, he was planting it in the neighbouring isle. And there,

RUINS OF IONA (BEFORE RESTORATION).

where it had been so much needed, it took root, and spread all over the land.†

Learned, pious, and active, St. Patrick's preachers came to be famous throughout Europe. Many of them traversed foreign countries as secular and religious teachers,

* *History of Ireland*, Maunder. Patrick's name was Magontius, but the Patrick was kept to when the Duke of Connaught was named after him in 1850, the full name being Arthur William Patrick Albert.

† Usher showed Patrick to the world as a simple and mighty evangelical preacher. George III., a strong Protestant, established in 1783 Ireland's only order of knighthood, the Knights of St. Patrick. The Religious Tract Society have published his works in their "Christian Classics."

and the monasteries of Ireland began to attract the best youth even of England. The music of the Irish churches also became famous, and in the reign of Pepin teachers were sent for at great expense to instruct the nuns of Nivelle in psalmody.

But, indirectly, Scotland also owes its Christianisation to St. Patrick. If we pass over rather more than a century, we find Columba, an Irish abbot, going to Scotland, when about forty years of age, and working for more than a generation as a Christian missionary, on the mainland and in the Hebrides. His chief station was Iona, a rocky island lying off the south-western extremity of Mull. After him it was called Icolmkill (Iona-columb-kill), and the community there became the headquarters of a movement for the conversion of North Britain, the missionaries being devout native Celts.

Columba and his followers, in fact, did for years the work both of a Bible Society and a Divinity College. Called "awful ground" by Dr. Johnson, the burial-place afterwards of a large number of Scotch, Irish, and Norwegian kings, Iona became at this period the light of the Western World. Portions of Scripture were constantly copied and studied in the rude College which arose, and the neighbouring tribes were sought for Christ from this

> "Isle of Columba's cell,
> Where Christian piety's soul-cheering spark,
> Kindled from Heaven between the light and dark
> Of time, shone like the morning star."

Columba was of royal blood, but circumstances forced him out of the land where he might have ruled. The immediate occasion of his leaving Ireland was an adverse decision of the Synod of Teltown. A young prince, who had fled to him for protection, was slain, and Columba going to his native mountains in a rage, gathered an army of revenge, and a battle was fought. Then he left his country, never to return, and resolved to devote himself wholly to Christian, Biblical, and Missionary labours. He had founded a monastery when only twenty-

nine, and now, at the age of forty-two (A.D. 563), he set out in a wicker boat, accompanied by twelve of his friends and followers. Once landed in Iona, and a cairn built to mark the spot, whence no trace of their native land could be seen, the whole company applied themselves devotedly to the work so much needed.

Columba was a kingly man, with a magnificent voice, great familiarity with Scripture, powers of organisation, and "in his habits of life, like unto Paul the Apostle," according to his biographer, Adamnan. For thirty years he traversed the sea in his frail wicker boat, that he might visit the numerous islands about Iona. Through every strath and glen where there were Heathen families he went, and the true Faith won its way largely throughout what we now call Scotland, three hundred churches being founded by him and his associates. His name means dove-like, but he was naturally passionate to a degree, and indeed is described as a man full of contradictions, "tender and irritable; rude and courteous; ironical and compassionate; caressing and imperious; grateful and revengeful." Many were killed in a sanguinary feud occasioned by him, and he was told to win as many to Christ as had perished. He set himself to do it, and far exceeded the number.

All this was going on in the North previous to Augustine's arrival in the South, the dates of Columba's death and King Ethelbert's conversion at Canterbury almost coinciding.*

But now we must come from Iona to Lindisfarne and Whitby. The English settlers in Northumbria asked the followers of Columba to send them a missionary. This was done at once, but the brother selected returned discouraged, saying that the people were dull and obstinate. As Fuller says, however, "hard with hard makes no wall," and Aidan, with a milder temper, soon had a different

* The Romanist party persecuted the Scots for non-essentials, but both Lingard and Alban Butler write "Saint" Columba, though he and such men as Columbanus, Fursey, Boisil, and Aidan, all "Sainted," were as much Protestants as Melancthon.

report to give. He founded a monastery at Lindisfarne, chief of the Farne Islands, about nine miles from Berwick-on-Tweed, attached at low water to the coast. The island is only about two miles long, and is chiefly covered with sand, but here the followers of Columba established themselves in such force that it came to be called Holy Island. They worked effectually from this point for the conversion of the North of England, just as Columba had done before for the conversion of Scotland. They trusted the wild men whom they sought to soften, instead of fearing them, went up into their hills to live with them as comrades, and at Lindisfarne itself a bishopric was established, which was not removed to Chester le Street, and then Durham, till the ravages of the Danes made it imperative. Bede tells us that Aidan took care that all those that were employed by him should spend a considerable part of their time in Bible study, and there is little doubt that amongst all such missionary-monks the Word of God was familiar enough in its Latin garb. He says, however, that, having none to bring them the Synodal Decrees, being so far away from the rest of the world, they only practised such works of piety and chastity as they could learn from the prophetical, evangelical, and apostolical writings. Poor, unfurnished creatures! Only the Bible, and no Synodal Decrees! However, they rooted Christianity amongst a Heathen people.

There remains now only one more link in the chain which connects our first English Bible-work, the Paraphrase of Cædmon, with St. Patrick. Amongst his other works, Bishop Aidan consecrated Heia, the first woman who devoted herself to missionary labours in the North of England, and who founded the religious house at Herutea, Hartlepool. She was succeeded by the Abbess and Princess Hilda, who afterwards moved away to a new missionary station on the East Cliff of Whitby, then called Streoneshalh.

Fuller tells us that all monastic institutions were clear in the spring but muddy in the stream; and Bede, our great authority for this period, gives us a beautiful picture

of the Whitby Abbey when it was thus in its early purity: "Men and women studied and were taught the strict observance of justice, piety, chastity, and other virtues, and particularly of peace and love; so that, after the example of the primitive Church, no person was there rich, and none poor, all things being in common to all, and none having any property. Hilda's prudence was so great that not only persons of the middle rank but even kings and princes sometimes asked and received her advice.

WHITBY (STREANÆSHALCH) ABBEY.

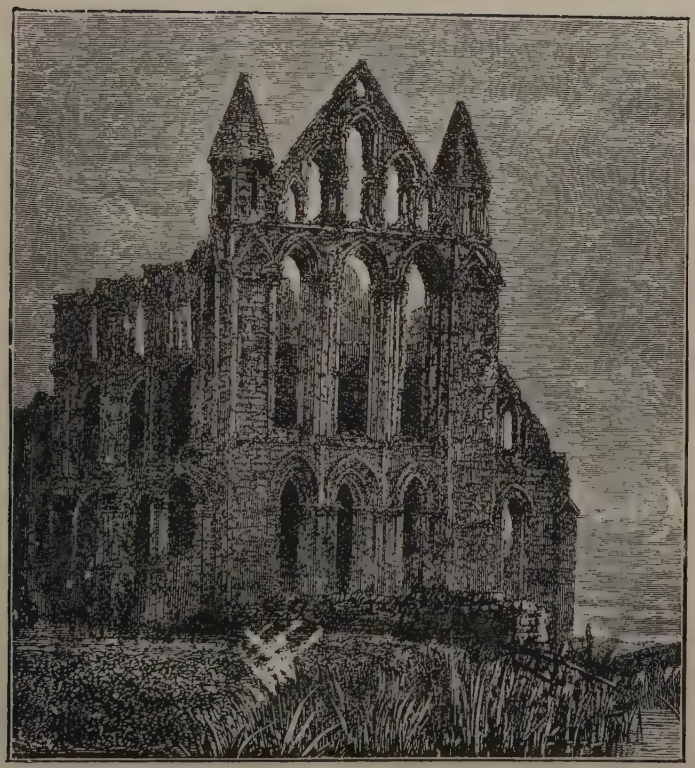
She obliged those who were under her direction to attend so much to the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and to exercise themselves so much in works of justice, that many might very easily be found there fit for ecclesiastical duties. In short, we afterwards saw five bishops taken out of that monastery, all of them men of singular merit and sanctity." *

* Whitby was called the Bay of the Lighthouse, and Hilda's monastery was not at all unique, in its including both men and women, in this early period. It was the same at Coldingham, Barking, Wimborne, and Repton, and in Ireland there was the great House of St. Bridget. Abroad also there were Autun, Fontevrault, and Brie.

To this place then belongs the work of Cædmon, with whom the literature of our country almost begins. Whatever there may have been before his time, with very little exception, has perished, and it is surely fitting that a literature grand and musical as that of our own land should have its keynote struck by a man who turned the greatest of all books into a poem for the people of his day. "No one could ever compare with him!" exclaims Bede, "for he learnt the art of singing, not from men, but from God."

Cædmon was probably one of the converts made by the Whitby monks, being first a lay brother and afterwards a monk. He belongs to the latter half of the seventh century, when rustic feasts were common, the guests coming often from some distance, and the cattle which brought them being watched over by some one of the company, as they were in need of protection against the plundering raids so frequent in such rude times.

It was common for the harp to be passed round on such occasions, and one day, when it was approaching Cædmon, he left the table to take his place in mounting guard over the cattle and property. He could not sing, and doubtless he would wish that some better lays were common at such times. But, according to Bede, when he had composed himself to rest, a person appeared to him, and said, "Cædmon, sing some song to me." He answered, "I cannot sing, for that was the reason why I left the entertainment, and retired to this place." "Yet you shall sing," replied his visitor. "What shall I sing?" rejoined Cædmon. "Sing the beginning of created things," was the answer, upon which our poet awoke, and soon afterwards produced a paraphrase of the history of Genesis. The Abbess Hilda, exhorting him to quit the secular habit, and join them in the monastery, he did so, and in Bede's quaint words, "like a clean animal chewing the cud, he converted the sacred story into most harmonious verse."



WHITBY ABBEY (WEST FRONT).

Here is Cædmon's description of the passage of the Red Sea :—

"Then the mind of his men
Became despondent, after they saw
From the South ways the hosts of Pharaoh
Coming forth, moving over the holt,
The band glittering.
They prepared their arms, the war advanced,
Bucklers gleamed, trumpets sung,
Standards rattled; they trod the nation's frontier;
Around them screamed the fowls of war
Greedy of battle, dewy feathered;
Over the bodies of the host,
The dark choosers of the slain,
The wolves sung their horrid evensong,
In hopes of food, the reckless beasts
Threatening death to the valiant." *

Take another example of this early poem from the recent translation of Mr. Thorpe :—

"For us it is much right
That we, the guardians of the skies,
The glory King of Hosts
With our words praise, in our minds love.
He is of power the essence,
The head of all exalted creatures,
The Lord Almighty;
To Him has beginning never, origin been,
Nor ever cometh end of the Eternal Lord.
But He is ever powerful
Over the Heavenly Thrones." †

Perhaps from such extracts the reader may think that such writing is scarcely to be classed either with the patient and exact translations of later days, or with the epics of Milton. Mr. Morley, however, has shown us that a version of this earliest poem may be given which is not wanting in fire and real poetic feeling. Here, for instance, is the uprearing of the firmament, which is illustrated by one of many quaint cuts adorning

* *Biographia Britannica Literaria*, T. Wright, M.A.
† English Translation, B. Thorpe, F.S.A.

the original manuscript, now in the Bodleian Library at Oxford:—

"Then peace was among dwellers in the sky,
Blaming and lawless malice were gone out,
And angels feared no more, since plotting foes
Who cast off Heaven were bereft of light.
Their glory seats behind them in God's realm,
Enlarged with gifts, stood happy, bright with bloom,
But ownerless, since the cursed spirits went
Wretched to exile within bars of Hell.
Then thought within His mind the Lord of Hosts
How He again might fix within His rule
The great Creation, thrones of Heavenly Light,
High in the Heavens for a better band,
Since the proud scathers had relinquished them.
The Holy God therefore in His great might
Willed that there should be set beneath Heaven's span
Earth, firmament, wide waves, created world,
Replacing foes cast headlong from their home.
Here yet was naught save darkness of the cave,
The broad abyss, whereon the stedfast king
Looked with his eyes and saw that space of gloom,
Saw the dark cloud lower in lasting night,
Was deep and dim, vain, useless, strange to God,
Black under Heaven, wan, waste, till through His Word,
The King of Glory had created life.
Here first the Eternal Father, guard of all
Of Heaven and earth, raised up the firmament.
The Almighty Lord set firm by His strong power
This roomy land: grass greened not yet the plain,
Ocean far spread hid the wan ways in gloom,
Then was the Spirit gloriously bright
Of Heaven's keeper borne over the deep
Swiftly. The life giver, the angel's Lord,
Over the ample ground bade come forth light.
Quickly the high king's bidding was obeyed,
Over the waste there shone light's holy ray.
Then parted He, Lord of triumphant might.
Shadow from shining, darkness from the light.
Light by the Word of God was named Day." *

Of course the style of the Anglo-Saxon poetry is abandoned here for the sake of rhythm. We find very short lines, as a rule, in this early poetry, with quick transitions. "The verses ring," as Longfellow has expressed it, "like

* *Illustrations of English Religion*, H. Morley.

the sharp blows of the hammer upon the anvil." The harmony of the short verses depended chiefly on the alliteration, or the recurrence of the initial letters of the words, and upon a loose, varying rhythm regulated rather by the ear than by any fixed metrical canon. End rhymes were scarcely used, though in the Exeter MSS. there is one poem entirely written in rhyme, with alliteration. The Anglo-Saxons had, however, a store of poetical expressions, differing from the language of common life, and forming the stock in trade of the bard, rendered familiar to the ear by their constant repetition, and therefore likely to be forcibly impressed on the memory. This poetical stock in trade became somewhat copious, new words and phrases being formed of compounds, most of which became naturali ed in the language. In Cædmon's description of the Flood, for instance, there are no less than thirty expressions used to describe the Ark. It is the sea-horse, the greatest of watery chambers, the high mansion, the holy wood, the great sea-chest, the greatest of treasure-houses, the palace of the ocean, the wooden fortress, the floor of the waves, the receptacle of Noah, the moving roof, the feasting house, the nailed building, etc. Much was of course very crude, and Lardner compares Cædmon with St. Avitus of Vienna, who lived a century and a half before the Saxon. But the Gallic prelate was acquainted with the memorials of Latin taste.

Take, as another example of this seventh-century poem, Cædmon's account of the fall of Satan. In the early Church it was not uncommon to speak of Satan as Lucifer, and to apply the description of the King of Babylon and his fall to the author of all pride. Babylon is typical of tyrannical, selfish power, which is cast down by the powers of Heaven. But we must not go beyond a short extract:—

> "His mind urged him
> That North and South he should begin to work,
> Found buildings; said he questioned whether he
> Would serve God. Wherefore, he said, shall I toil?
> No need have I of Master. I can work
> With my own hands great marvels, and have power
> To build a throne more worthy of a God,

Higher in Heaven. Why shall I for His smile
Serve Him, bend to Him thus in vassalage ?
I may be God as He.
Stand by me ! strong supporters, firm in strife ;
Hard mooded heroes, famous warriors,
Have chosen me for chief; one may take thought
With such for counsel, and with such secure
Large following. My friends in earnest they,
Faithful in all the shaping of their minds ;
I am their master, and may rule this realm.
Therefore it seems not right that I should cringe
To God for any good, and I will be
No more His servant."

"When the Almighty heard
With how great pride His angel raised himself
Against his Lord, foolishly spake high words
Against the Supreme Father, he that deed
Must expiate, and in the work of strife
Receive his portion, take for punishment
Utmost perdition. So doth every man
That sets himself in battle against God,
In sinful strife against the Lord Most High.
Then was the Mighty wroth ; Heaven's highest Lord
Cast him from his high seat, for he had brought
His Master's hate on him."

Cædmon probably did not turn poet till rather late in life, as he died A.D. 680. King Alfred inserted some of his poetry in his translation of Bede, but the collection that goes by his name is probably the work of more than one hand. Hickes thinks part of it is in the Dano-Saxon dialect of the tenth century, in which Astle concurs.*

* Warton says the only genuine Cædmon is the small metrical fragment inserted in Alfred's version of the Venerable Bede's *History*, and that the "spurious Cædmon" belongs to the same period as the *Durham Book*. Perhaps the rude Northumbrian verses of Cædmon were regarded by the Ælfredian and later ages as raw material to be elaborated. Ten Brink's idea that the less poetical part of Genesis is Cædmon's mainly, and that is all, is refuted by the evidence of the Ruthwell Cross. Mr. Henry Bradley points out that Professor Sievers also is wrong in saying that the Temptation and Fall are translations of an old Saxon poem by the author of the "Heliand." Probably rather the "Heliand" and its sister poem in Anglo-Saxon are both of them translations from the verses of the Northumbrian poet, though much altered. This result is confirmed by the testimony of the Latin Preface to the "Heliand," which virtually ascribes the authorship of the poem to Cædmon himself.—LESLIE STEPHEN.

God is called the "blithe-hearted King," the patriarchs are "Earls," Abraham is a "wise heedy man," the sons of Reuben are "Vikings" (sea-pirates), and the Ethiopians are "a people brown with the hot coals of Heaven." This early poetry of our ancestors came to extol the virtues of courage, generosity, and fidelity, whilst the coward, the niggard, and the traitor are the objects of its special abhorrence. Religion and war were its themes, and scarcely love at all, though woman is treated with delicacy and respect, after the general diffusion of Christian ideas.

The last modern rendering of Cædmon we take from Conybeare's *Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry.* Mr. Conybeare has compiled a very interesting volume, in which he says that our vernacular poetry had assumed as early as the eighth century the form and character which it preserved with little or no alteration until the Norman Conquest. He remarks on Cædmon's excessive prolixity, the mere proposition, "Let us praise God, the Maker of Heaven and Earth," being expanded into eighteen lines. He is inclined to accept the whole of what has come to us under Cædmon's name as his work, and thinks that Hickes and Wanley are for putting everything insipid into the earlier period, and better work into the Dano-Saxon.

Surely the following account of the destruction of Pharaoh's host only wants a good elocutionist:—

> "The Heathen stood aghast; fierce raged the flood,
> And wailing spirits gave the shriek of death;
> The blood streamed fresh on each man's destined grave;
> The sea foamed gore; screams were amid the waves,
> As though the waters wept; darkling uprose
> The whirlpool mists; Egypt was backward turned,
> Dismayed they fled; fear struck their inmost soul;
> How fallen their boasting now! how would they joy
> Once more to reach their home, but that foul surf
> Swift rolling in its force, o'erwhelmed their pride,
> That none returned of all that warrior train.
> Midways Jehovah stayed their mad career;
> Where lay their path, there raged the ocean wave.
> Low sunk the host; the streams ascended high,

> And high as Heaven uprose the vengeful storm,
> Loud wept the warriors; from each dying tongue
> The shriek of woe pierced the cloud darkened air.
> Mad ocean raged; forth from his slumbers roused,
> In all his terrors stood the king of floods;
> With horrid din he chased the warrior host;
> Corpse rolling upon corpse, the unpitying wave
> Deep in its foaming bosom held their pride."

Sir F. Palgrave, in acknowledging that there may be a second and later Cædmon, called by some "the spurious Cædmon," says that, whoever the author may have been, the remote antiquity of the work is unquestionable, and in poetical imagery and feeling it excels all the other early remains of the North, and belongs, not only to Englishmen, but to every branch of the great Teutonic family.

Mr. Bosanquet goes beyond this, in his *Fall of Man, or Paradise Lost*, of Cædmon. He has produced a very readable volume on the subject, in which he says that the earliest poetry of the English or Anglo-Saxons is far above the poetry of any other country of Europe at the same period, and that Cædmon's poem is far above all other Anglo-Saxon poetry. He exclaims, with national pride: "When we look back through so many ages upon our old bard, the monk of Whitby, upon his contemporary and biographer, the venerable Bede, standing almost alone in Europe amid the ruins of the literature of the Old World, presaging the greatness of the future, we become impressed with the large share our country has had in building up the literature of the Christian world, and with the great antiquity of our own. And if we look around for others of the same age, we find them still among the Angles; Aldhelm and Alcuin are ours."

Certainly we are not to claim what does not belong to us, through national pride or anything else. But we can only judge from evidence adduced, and that is decidedly in favour of Mr. Bosanquet's contention. Other nations may have had their poems, songs, and romances, but they have not come down to us. We have positive proof that Cædmon's paraphrase belongs to the seventh century,

and the dates of the earliest manuscripts in the vernacular in other countries are as follows :—

German	9th century.
Northern French	,, ,,
Southern Italian	11th ,,
Provençal	,, ,,
Norse	,, ,,
Northern Italian	12th ,,
Spanish	,, ,,

And as to a large portion of Cædmon being spurious, Mr. Robert Spence Watson may almost be said to have disposed of that.*

He gives a description of the MS. in the Bodleian Library, the only existing one. It is a small folio of 229 pages, the first 212 being written in a clear and careful hand, and the remaining 17 in a later and more careless. The MS. is illustrated up to the 96th page, and spaces are left for further illustrations.

As to the lines which appear in Bede's *History*, given by King Alfred, they have gone through the process of double translation, and Bede is careful to state that he only gives Cædmon's meaning, and not his words. The MS. was the property of the famous Usher, Primate of Ireland, who founded the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, early in the seventeenth century. He it was who put the dates down the sides of our Reference Bibles, which some almost regard as part of the text. It was in his search for books for his College Library that he discovered this precious manuscript, most likely then classed amongst the "vetusta et inutilia." At this time (A.D. 1620–50) there was living in England, as librarian to the Earl of Arundel, a learned and kindly man, Francis Dujon the younger, the son of a Professor of Divinity at Leyden. He was on friendly terms with Milton and most of the eminent men of the day, and is known in literature as Junius. At this time his favourite study was Old English, and in it he thought to find the etymologies of all the tongues of Northern Europe. Usher thought,

* *Cædmon, the First English Poet.*

therefore, that he could not place the MS. of Cædmon in better hands; and so it proved, for Junius had it published as a small quarto at Amsterdam, though without translation or notes, and then bequeathed it to the Bodleian Library.

It is interesting also to know that this early poem and paraphrase possibly inspired Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Junius printed it at Amsterdam in 1655, and the date of *Paradise Lost* is 1661. Milton was interested in the studies of Junius, and a few years before had written his own *History of Britain*, dwelling at length upon early Saxon times. The discovery and publication of such a work could not fail therefore to make a deep impression upon a mind like Milton's, and probably suggested his own glorious epic. Bosanquet, in publishing the Miltonic portions of Cædmon in English heroic verse, gives many traces of the influence of the earlier and ruder poet on Milton. So it is probable that, as the *Messiah* suggested the *Creation*, Cædmon suggested Milton's great epic.*

Thus from the north of England comes our first extant Bible-work. The boy Succat becomes St. Patrick; Columba is the fruit, seen after many days, of his teaching; he wins Scotland for Christ, and his missionaries are sent to Northumberland and Durham; one of them sets apart Hilda for missionary work; she and her fellows are the means of Cædmon's conversion; and at Whitby his poetical paraphrase is put together. So there is a more suitable and permanent memorial of Hilda's sainthood than the rolled-up stone snakes found at Whitby on the seashore, and which tradition ascribes in some strange way to her prayers; or

> "The very form of Hilda fair
> Hovering upon the sunny air,"

which the robust in faith see, at favoured times, near the northern window of the Abbey Church! The famous

* Masson says, however, that the part of *Paradise Lost* most resembling Cædmon was not included in Milton's original conception, and does not seem to have been added till after his friend Junius had shown him his version of Cædmon.

John of Beverley was trained there, and the still more famous Wilfrid. But more even than Wilfrid, with his striking character and romantic life, will Whitby be for ever associated with Cædmon, whose work we can turn over to-day in the quiet of the Bodleian Library, though twelve centuries have passed since he thought he could not sing, and out-sang them all. His death is touchingly given by Bede, and we transcribe his words:—

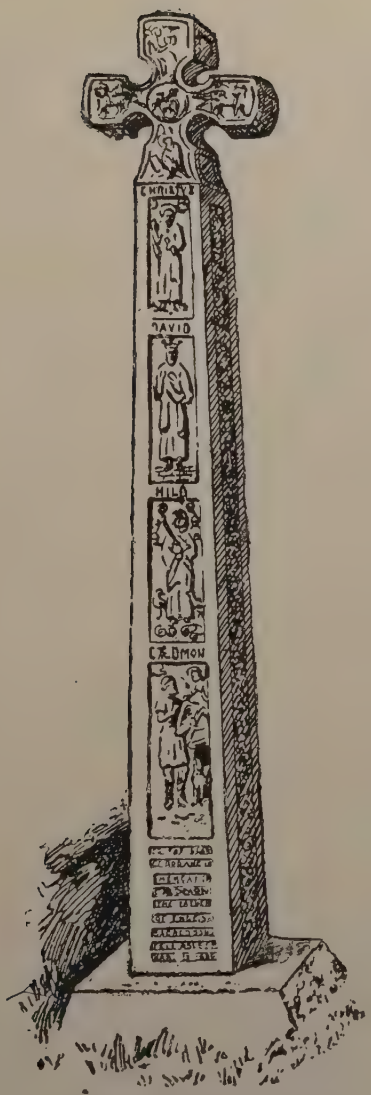
"When the time of his departure drew near, he laboured for the space of fourteen days under a bodily infirmity which seemed to prepare the way, yet so moderate that he could walk and talk all the time. In his neighbourhood was the house to which those that were sick and like shortly to die were carried. He desired the person that attended him in the evening, as the night came on in which he was to depart this life, to make ready a place there for him to take his rest. This person, wondering why he should desire it, because there was as yet no sign of his dying soon, did what he had ordered. He accordingly went there, and conversing pleasantly in a joyful manner with the rest that were in the house before, when it was past midnight he asked them whether they had the Eucharist there. They answered, 'What need of the Eucharist, for you are not likely to die, since you talk so merrily with us, as if you were in perfect health.' 'However,' said he, 'bring me the Eucharist.' Having received the same into his hand, he asked whether they were all in perfect charity with him, and without any enmity or rancour. They answered that they were all in perfect charity and free from anger; and in their turn asked him whether he was in the same mind towards them. He answered, 'I am in charity, my children, with all the servants of God.' Then, strengthening himself with the Sacrament, he prepared for the entrance into another life, and asked how near the time was when the brothers were to be awakened to sing the nocturnal praises of the Lord. They answered, 'It is not far off.' Then he said, 'Well, let us wait that hour,' and he laid his head on the pillow,

and falling into a slumber, ended his life so in silence. Thus it came to pass that, as he served God with a simple and pure mind, and undisturbed devotion, so he now departed to His presence, leaving the world by a quiet death; and by what has been said he seems to have had foreknowledge of his death." Cædmon had said that, after our first parents' sin, God let the roof of Heaven, adorned with holy stars, remain for their solace, and thus he passed into its brightness.

The Church of the North was thus distinct from the Church of the South, which received the truth again first-hand from Rome. Augustine's work was the fruit of a Pope's interest in fair-haired Saxon slave-boys, and thus the Christianised South did all things after the Romish pattern. In the North it was another thing. Columba, in writing to Pope Boniface, could use such language as this: "The Word of God is the only Rule of Faith; it is your fault if you have deviated from it." The observance of Easter and other matters was different, and when the country was largely won for Christ, it remained to be united in one fold. This took place at the time of Theodore, and the general laws and usages of the early Church were accepted almost throughout the British Isles.

It was the joining of two large streams, for Columba had founded a hundred monasteries, and nearly four hundred churches, and ordained three thousand monks. There were also those belonging to the early British Church, and we hear of a single monastery at Bangor, where there were no less than three thousand monks, who would have nothing to do with Augustine. Northumbria indeed took the lead in Teutonic Britain at this time.

No doubt, though as yet we had nothing but the paraphrase of Cædmon in the ancient tongue of our country, the Latin Bible was constantly studied in Cædmon's time, and Inett closes his sketch of the seventh century by saying that the knowledge of Scripture was the best qualification for the highest stations in the Church,



MEMORIAL TO CÆDMON AT WHITBY.

and "in consequence the doctrines of transubstantiation and the worship of images were unknown, and the doctrine of purgatory was unformed, though the first rude lines of it were drawn." *

There have been a number of editions of Cædmon. Junius published his at Amsterdam in 1655 in Old Saxon, without translation or comments. In 1826 Conybeare's *Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry* were edited by his brother. Here are portions of Cædmon. Cædmon was edited by Mr. B. Thorpe, F.S.A., in 1832. The text is given in Old Saxon and is translated. Mr. Thorpe says it is Saxon as pure as the works of Alfred. Bouterwek published Cædmon in 1841, with a valuable introduction, literary and historical, and a translation into German prose. A large collection of Saxon Verse was also published by Grein in 1857. It is untranslated, but Professor March says that special students of Saxon must spend their days and nights with Grein. In Ettmüller's *Scopas and Boceras* there are also substantial portions of Cædmon. America has entered the field lately. Theodore W. Hunt, of Princeton College, has published Cædmon's *Exodus and Daniel* at Boston in 1883. It constitutes a small cheap primer.

The Society of Antiquaries (London) have also rendered valuable service. They have printed the whole of the plates in vol. 24 of the *Archæologia*, with facsimile specimens of the MS. There is also a valuable introduction by Mr. Henry Ellis, F.R.S., Secretary of the Bodleian Library, where the MS. is kept.

A memorial has recently been raised to Cædmon at Whitby, as the Father of English Poetry. It stands in the churchyard on the Cliff, under the crumbling walls of his old home, and was unveiled by Mr. Alfred Austin, the Poet Laureate, on 21st September 1898. Amongst others who took part in the ceremonies of the day were the Bishops of Bristol and Hull, Professors Lebour and Gollanz, Canons Rawnsley and Austen, Mr. Skeat, and the Marquess of Normanby. The following hymn was

* *Origines Anglicanæ.*

sung, having been composed by Canon Rawnsley, and founded on Cædmon's first verses:—

"Now praise we the Lord,
Who guards the Heaven's height,
Extolled be His Wisdom
His Counsel and Might.
The glorious Creator,
Who wonders began,
Upbuilder of Nature
And Maker of man.

Now praise we the Lord,
Almighty of mind,
The Captain Eternal,
And Guard of mankind,
Whose Wisdom excelling,
First spread Heaven above,
Then gave earth for dwelling
To men of His love.

Now praise we the Lord,
Who useth us all
The king in his castle,
The hind in the stall.
On high-born and lowly
His gifts are outpoured,
And hearts that are holy
Sing praise to the Lord.

Now praise we the Lord,
Inspirer of song,
From far generations
The stream flows along.
With winds and with waters,
With nights and with days,
Our sons and our daughters
Shall join in His praise. Amen."

Certainly this distinguished group of men were well engaged in doing honour to the Father of English Minstrelsy. As Wright says, his advent must have been hailed by the Christian teachers of the time much as if a native Milton were to arise now in some Hindu or Chinese village to propagate the truth amongst his own countrymen. The new religion had been introduced amongst the upper ranks, and such a man could not fail to propagate it amongst the people generally.

CHAPTER VI

ALDHELM

"From the Anglo-Saxon age down to Wycliffe, we in England can show such a succession of Biblical versions, in metre and in prose, as are not to be equalled by any other nation in Europe."

SIR F. PALGRAVE.

AT the commencement of the eighth century Adelm, or Aldhelm, the first Bishop of Sherborne, now represented by Salisbury, translated the Psalms into the vernacular. We find him praising the nuns that, "studying the Scriptures, they had manifested their industry and towardliness in the daily reading of them." But already monastic institutions were beginning to present a different picture, for the Council of Cloveshoe, or Cliff's Hoe, in Kent, as early as A.D. 747, ordered that the monasteries should not be turned into places of amusement for harpers and buffoons, and that laymen should not have too free access to them, lest they should be scandalised at what they saw within their walls.

Aldhelm was a scion of the West Saxon kings,* and was educated partly by the famous Abbot Adrian, and partly by Maildulph, who gave his name to Malmesbury, where he gathered some pupils. This Maildulph, "a Scot by nation, a philosopher by erudition, and a monk by profession," as William of Malmesbury describes him, had a sort of cell where his scholars learnt and almost starved. He had been driven by robber raids from the Western Highlands, which had been colonised by the

* Freeman thinks he may have been the son of Centwine, King of the West Saxons, who died A.D. 685.

Irish missionaries. About 637 a group of scholars were gathered at his feet, and the chair of the master was set up under the shadow of a small basilica, or chapel of wood, which was preserved even in the twelfth century.* As at St. Albans and Westminster, the church was first built, and the town followed in due time. It is a picturesque one in Wiltshire, on a hill, rising out of a low land watered by little streams and runnels. The lazar hospital of St. John speaks of the past; and the abbey of later days, though partly ruinous, is used for worship.

Aldhelm became the Abbot of Malmesbury, and a characteristic incident of him is preserved. It is said that observing with pain the carelessness of the peasantry as to sacred things, he stationed himself on one occasion in the character of a minstrel on a bridge which they had to pass over the Ivel, and soon collected them by the beauty of his verse. When he found that he had secured their attention, he gradually introduced amongst the popular poetry words of a more serious turn, till at length he succeeded in impressing upon their minds a truer feeling of devotion, whereas, says William of Malmesbury, his biographer, if he had acted harshly he would have made no impression. Our forefathers were thus evidently not to be driven, but won, like most of their successors. Leland mentions these *Cantiones Saxonicæ*, one of which continued to be commonly sung in William of Malmesbury's time.

Aldhelm visited Rome whilst he was abbot, at the invitation of Pope Sergius, securing grants for his monasteries, and the following verses have been preserved, which may be found interesting, as a sample of early poetry :—

On Entering the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul at Rome.

"See here this new built Temple's glories rise,
And lift its sacred banner to the skies:

* *Malmesbury*, M. E. C. Walcott, B.D. The dates of Aldhelm's life are given by William of Malmesbury from doubtful or forged charters. Smith and Wace.

MALMESBURY ABBEY (EXTERIOR).

Here Paul and Peter shed abroad their light,
To guide a world where all before was night.
To them this land, to them these courts belong,
Their names the people chant in hallowed song.
Hail, Heavenly Porter, Keeper of Heaven's Gate,
And hear the prayers of those who in thy Temple wait,
Whilst down their cheeks doth run the briny tear,
Do thou their supplications kindly hear.
With ardent vows they mourn the mis-spent past
And vow that such misdeeds shall be their last.
And thou, great teacher, deign to hear me, Paul,
Thou who didst bear the former name of Saul,
And spurn Christ's worship for each Heathen rite,
Till on thy eyes He poured His glorious light;
Oh, kindly hear the vows to thee they pay,
And lend thy hand to guide the suppliants' way.
Here to thy Church what numerous votaries throng,
To thee the keys of Heaven and Hell belong.
Forth let the springs of Heavenly bounty flow
To cheer Christ's faithful worshippers below." *

Aldhelm's version of the Psalms was discovered (!) in the beginning of the last century in the Royal Library at Paris. The first fifty are in prose, and the rest in verse. The hymns and prayers commonly used in the churches of the Saxons were in the Latin language, as taught by the first missionaries from Rome, but often in the daily service they chanted the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and portions of the Psalms in their own tongue. And it seems that these portions were taken from Aldhelm's version. Bede's account of him is that "he was a man most learned in all respects, for he had a clean style, and was wonderful for ecclesiastical and liberal erudition." Clean it may have been, but there are a multitude of far-fetched phrases, for which William of Malmesbury thinks it right to explain that modes of expression differ in different nations. "The Greeks, for instance, express themselves impliedly, the Romans clearly, the Gauls gorgeously, the Angles turgidly." Mr. Turner has collected the following epithets and figures out of a few

* *Patres Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ*, vol. i., Dr. Giles. Stephen, however, thinks that Dr. Giles, following Faricius in this, wrongly attributes these verses to his visit to Rome. They may refer to Malmesbury.

pages of his prose works: "the golden semblances of the virtues; the white jewels of merit; the purple flowers of modesty; the transparent eyeballs of virginal bashfulness; the swan-coloured hoarness of age; the torrid courtesy of the dogmas; the phlebotomy of the Divine Word; the folding doors of dumb taciturnity; the shining lamps of chastity burning with the oil of modesty; the fœtid sink of impurity lamentably overwhelming the ships of the soul." * His verses are, however, from the study of better models, and are much preferable to his pompous prose, with alliteration and compound words. It is Bale who says that Aldhelm translated the Psalter,† and the writer who made the copy was an Englishman who seems to have lived about A.D. 1000. In modern English, his version of the 84th Psalm is:—

"Lord, to me Thy minsters are
Courts of Honour, passing fair;
And my spirit deems it well
There to be, and there to dwell;
Heart and flesh would fain be there,
Lord, Thy life, Thy love to share.

There the sparrow speeds her home,
And in time the turtles come;
Safe their nestling young they rear,
Lord of Hosts, Thine altars near,
Dear to them Thy peace, but more
To the souls who there adore."

Here is the 68th Psalm:—

"God the Word of Wisdom gave;
Preachers, who His voice have heard,
Taught by Him, in meekness brave,
Speed the message of that Word.
. . . . . .

* *History of Anglo-Saxons*, Sharon Turner.

† *Scriptorum Illust. Catalogus*, 1557, p. 84. Mr. Churton, in his *Early English Church*, is responsible for adopting the tradition that Aldhelm translated the Psalter, and that the one discovered in the Library at Paris, and edited by Thorpe, is to be attributed to him.

MALMESBURY ABBEY (INTERIOR).

Mighty King, with beauty crowned,
In His House the world's proud spoil
Oft in almsdeeds dealt around,
Cheers the poor wayfarer's toil.

. . . . . .

If among His Clerks you rest
Silver plumes shall you enfold;
Fairer than the culver's breast,
Brighter than her back of gold."

The harp was the favourite instrument with the Saxons, and these Psalms would be adapted to their own national melodies, so as to accompany them. Here is Psalm xciii. 3 and 4 :—

"When the tempest wakes to wrath
Many waters wide and far,
On the ocean's dreadful path
Loud and high their voices are.

Wondrous ways those waters move
Where the sea streams swiftest flow;
But more wondrous far above,
Holy Lord, Thy glories show."

And as a last example, take Psalm cxvi. 15 :—

"As the beacon fire by night
That the Host of Israel led,
Such the glory, fair and bright,
Round the good man's dying bed;
'Tis a beacon bright and fair
Telling that the Lord is there."

Whilst Aldhelm ruled the affairs of the monastery, they flourished exceedingly. There was a general concourse of monks and students, some admiring the sanctity of his life, and others the depth of his learning. "For he was a man as unsophisticated in religion as multifarious in knowledge, whose piety surpassed even his reputation."

He was the chief adviser of King Ina in the restoration of Glastonbury Abbey, and his exertions in the work of Christian education made Wessex a rival of Northumbria, schools being multiplied such as produced Boniface.

The success of these was due in great measure to Daniel, Bishop of Winchester (705–45), but Aldhelm's reputation as a scholar has won for him the larger share of credit.* And it may be that this same general reputation has led to his being credited with the Anglo-Saxon version of the Psalms published by Mr. Thorpe in 1835. Mr. Wright thinks it extremely doubtful whether he had anything to do with it, as do others.†

The usual legends gather about his name. A beam of wood was once lengthened by his prayers; the ruins of the church he built, though open to the skies, were never wet during the worst weather; and a child nine days old, at his command, once spoke to clear the calumniated Pope from the imputation of being its father. The critical Lappenberg, comparing him with Bede, says he merited greater praise for the cultivation of his mother tongue, left him far behind in knowledge of the Canon of Roman Law, and greatly excelled him in influential, practical activity.

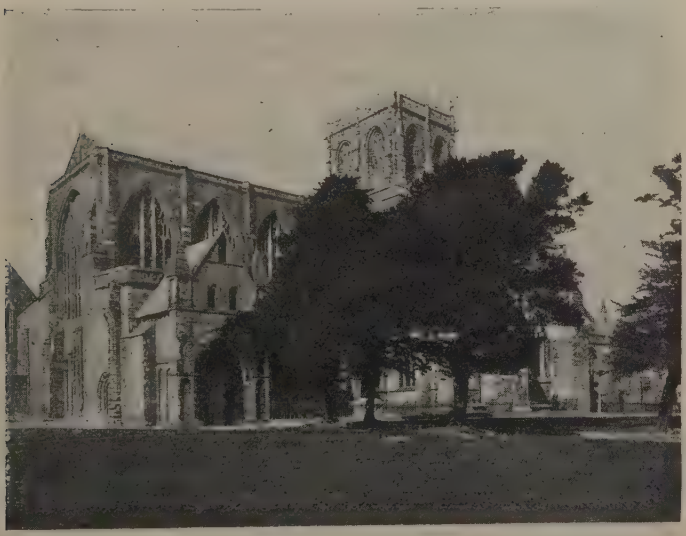
This last is indisputable, for to crown his other labours, he was made Bishop of Sherborne in 705, though he died four years afterwards, the same year as Wilfrid. When he went to Canterbury to be consecrated by his old friend Berthwold, hearing of the arrival of ships at Dover, he went to see if they had brought anything in his way. Amongst other books, he saw one containing the whole of the Old and New Testaments, which he bought, and William of Malmesbury tells us, in the twelfth century, that it was still preserved there.

King Ina planted the episcopate at Sherborne, and it lasted about four hundred years. Then, shorn of territory and power by the separation therefrom of divers other sees, the bishopric was in 1078 removed to Old Sarum, whence it was again transferred to Salisbury, about 1225. A magnificent church will be found in this ancient seat of religion, however, the work of restoration having been recently completed at a cost of £36,000. In A.D. 998 Aldhelm's church was made the Church of the Benedictine

* Smith and Wace.

† *Biog. Brit. Literaria*, T. Wright, M.A.

Monastery. It was rebuilt in 1122 in Norman style, although the bishopric had been recently removed. Then, in the fifteenth century, the alteration of the Norman church took place. There was a riot in 1436, when the rebuilding of the choir was in process, and the church was set on fire, the marks of which are still visible. When



SHERBORNE MINSTER, WHERE ALDHELM WAS FIRST BISHOP. RECENTLY AND BEAUTIFULLY RESTORED.

the Dissolution came, a century later, the Abbey Church was purchased by the inhabitants for £230 !

Aldhelm devoted himself very earnestly to the labours of his short episcopate, though he had protested against the appointment on account of his years, being seventy, and by no means strong. Archbishop Theodore was, indeed, about the same age when he entered upon his duties, and the " grand old man," as the Dean of Chichester calls him, held the see of Canterbury for twenty-two years. Aldhelm filled up his short term well, however, travelling

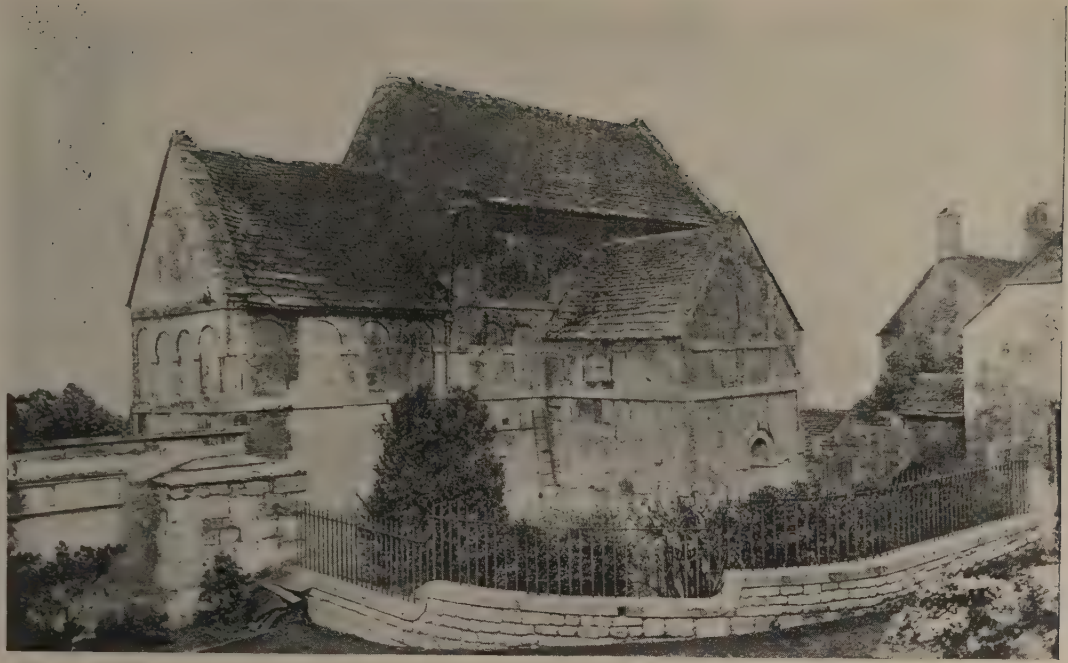
about from place to place, generally with his "ashen stock" to help him forward. Perhaps also, like Augustine, he carried a simple wooden cross, and held up before the people, or fixed in the ground, this symbol of the Faith whilst he proclaimed to them the truth of Christ. Bishopstrow is a remembrance of him, as Felixstowe is of the first East Anglian missionary.*

He died at Doulting, leaning upon a post which stood there, being fatigued with the labours of the day. The inhabitants erected a beautiful church on the site, which Dunstan specially visited to do honour to his memory about two centuries afterwards. His funeral also showed the honour in which he was held, and not less the hold which Christianity had already upon the people. His remains were carried back to Malmesbury under the care of St. Egwyn, Bishop of Worcester, and we are told that crowds followed the bier, and "gazed with loving eyes on the sweet expression and calm beauty of the dreamless face, which soothed their sorrow." At intervals of seven miles, stone crosses were set up, where the large procession rested.

Certainly, such a life and such a death afford some justification for his poem on the might of Christianity in its triumph over the old Paganism, now rapidly passing away. He cries—

"Not Mars, the Lord of wounds, who scatters round
The seeds of war, and fills the rancorous heart
With Gorgon poisons, can assist his fanes;
Nor Venus can avail, nor her vile boy;
The golden statues of Minerva fall,
Though fools proclaim her goddess of the Arts;
Nor he for whom, as ancient fictions sing,
The leafy vines their precious branches spread,
Can prop the columns nodding with their god;
The marbles totter with terrific crash,
And the vast fabric rushes into dust,
E'en Neptune surnamed Sovereign of the waves,
Who, by his swelling billows, rules the main,

* *St. Aldhelm*, Rev. W. H. Jones, F.S.A.



ALDHELM'S CHURCH, BRADFORD-ON-AVON.
GENUINE SAXON WORK, WITH EARLY SAXON NAVE, CHANCEL, AND PORCH. A COMPLETELY-PLANNED CHURCH IN THIS EARLY TIME.

He cannot save his sculptured effigies,
Whose marble brows the golden leaves surround;
Not e'en Alcides, who the Centaurs crushed,
And dared the fiery breath of prowling Cacus
When from his throat his words in flame were poured,
Though his right hand the dreadful club may grasp,
Can shield his temples when the Christian prays."

Aldhelm used rhyme before the Arabs entered Spain, who are supposed to have brought it. Certainly, he was a scholar for his time, though his style was not what we should call scholarly to-day. Dr. Parr has given us in our time "the battering-ram of political controversies," but Aldhelm preceded him with "the bulwarks of the Catholic Faith, shaken by the ballistæ of secular argument, and overthrown by the battering-rams of atrocious ingenuity."

It is possible that there was much more translation done at this period of which we have no present knowledge. The Bible was not so far accounted a dangerous book, to be only granted with faculties and dispensations. In a Consistory held at Rome A.D. 679, about British affairs, it was ordained that lessons out of the Divine Oracles should be always read for the edification of the Churches.* In Bede's *History* we find frequent references to skill in Scripture. Of Theodore, Hadrian's companion, we read that he gathered a great crowd of disciples, and "there daily flowed from him rivers of knowledge to water the hearts of his hearers, from Holy Writ, Poetry, Astronomy, and Arithmetic." Of Berthwold, who succeeded him in the archbishopric, the chief commendation was that he was a man learned in the Scriptures. Adamnan, Columba's biographer, has the same sign-manual attached to him—"a good and wise man, remarkably learned in Holy Scripture." Such references are frequent, and it is likely that, when there was such general love for and knowledge of the Scriptures, other attempts to translate at least particular books would be made.

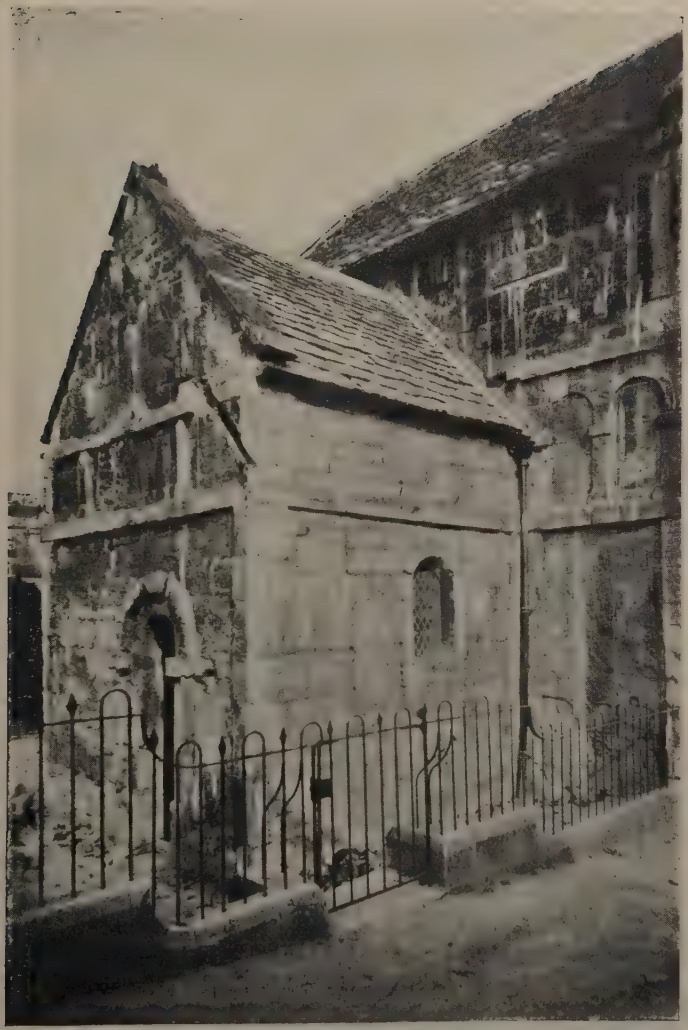
Aldhelm was Abbot of Malmesbury about thirty-two

* Spelman's *Councils*, vol. i.

years. Several churches came to be grouped together within the precincts, as at Abingdon, Bury St. Edmunds, and Glastonbury—where also he cut his name deeply. In one of them probably the famous John the Scot, witty and wise, the friend of Charles the Bald of France, was done to death by the pointed styles of his pupils. St. Dunstan presented bells and an organ, and in A.D. 986, apprehensive of the coming of the Danes, he removed the body of St. Aldhelm from its shrine into a stone structure, and placed beside it a casket filled with the sweetest balsam. The dreaded Northmen came, and the legend says that one bolder than the rest drew his sword, and was about to hack the precious stones from the shrine, when he fell stark, as if smitten by some unearthly blow. The Danes fled in dismay, and among all the neighbouring monasteries Malmesbury was the only one that escaped sacrilege.

In the days of William of Malmesbury, the whole fabric stood as then erected, superior in size and beauty to every ancient church in England. King Athelstan gave the town a royal charter, because of the gallantry and good service of the Malmesbury men in his great victory over the Danes at Sodbury Hill, and he was buried here, near to Aldhelm. They laid the devout king to his rest in October A.D. 949, not as his grandfather, the great Alfred, clad him as a boy, in a scarlet cloak, a diamond-studded belt, and a Saxon sword in a golden scabbard, but with all honour and decent pomp.

Dishonour came afterwards, however, to this home of one of the most famous of early Englishmen, and one of the best known of our early historians. Mr. Stumpe bought and turned the abbey into a cloth manufactory. The fate of the library has been piteously recorded by Aubrey, who says: "In my grandfather's days, the MSS. flew about like butterflies. The glovers at Malmesbury made great havoc of them, and gloves were wrapped up, no doubt, in many good pieces of antiquity. Mr. W. Stumpe, the great-grandson of the clothier, had several MSS., and when he brewed a barrel of special ale, his use



PORCH OF ALDHELM'S CHURCH, BRADFORD-ON-AVON.

was to stop the bunghole under the clay with a sheet of MS."

The destruction of the manuscripts and convent library, once presided over by William of Malmesbury, precentor and historian of the abbey, is indeed a lamentable and degrading tale. For nearly a century the brutal waste went on, and only one MS. is still preserved in the neighbourhood. Years after the Dissolution, a traveller passing through the town found that even the bakers had not consumed all the abbey books in heating their ovens. Superstitious fanaticism also destroyed many a priceless volume, though let us hope the world has grown saner, and that Wordsworth's lines will be true for the future. "Our ancestors," however, were often far from being as wise as he gives them credit for:

> "Our ancestors did feelingly perceive
> What in these holy structures we possess
> Of ornamental interest, and the charm
> Of pious sentiment diffused afar;
> Thus never shall the indignities of time
> Approach their reverend graces unopposed;
> Nor shall the elements be free to hurt
> Their fair proportions; nor the blinder rage
> Of bigot zeal, madly to overturn."

Aldhelm was useful in settling the differences between the ancient British Church and Augustine's followers,* and he founded cells or smaller monasteries, with churches, at Frome and Bradford-on-Avon. The little church at the latter—Ecclesiola—has been discovered in our time by

* By order of the Synod, he wrote a book against the "errors" of the Britons, and though only a tract, it made a sensation, as it appeared in the infancy of Anglo-Saxon authorship. In this Aldhelm says that the clergy of South Wales (Demetia) carried their abhorrence of the Catholic discipline to such an extreme that they punished the most trivial conformity with a long course of penance, and purified with fanatic scrupulosity every utensil which had been contaminated by the touch of a "Roman or a Saxon priest." No doubt there was a good deal of bitterness after the way Augustine treated them on the banks of the Severn, and the massacre at Bangor. In the same way Westminster Abbey has had, either in whole or part, not less than six consecrations and holy sprinklings.—*Ancient British and Irish Churches*, W. Cathcart, D.D.

the vicar, the Rev. W. H. Jones, F.S.A. It is one of the most interesting relics in England, being eleven hundred years old, and almost exactly as Aldhelm built it.* Even in this early period there was a nave, a chancel, and a porch, and the height is unusual for such a small building. King Alfred's troubles overtook him whilst living in the neighbourhood, and doubtless he has often knelt in it, and sung the psalms of deliverance and triumph. Edington—Ethandune—his great decisive victory, is only a few miles away, with the white horse cut in the hillside to commemorate it.

Let us close with the 103rd Psalm in Aldhelm's version, if it be his:—

Psalm CIII. 1–12.

"1. Bletsa, mine sawle, blidhe drihten;
and eall min inneran his thæne eccan naman!
2. Bletsige, mine sawle, bealde dryhten!
ne wylt thu ofergeottul æfre weordhan.
3. He thinum mandædum miltsade eallum;
and thine adle ealle gehælde.
4. He alysde thin lif leof of forwyrde;
fylde thinne willan fægere mid gode.
5. He the gesigefæste sodhre miltse
and the mildheorte mode getrymede;
eart thu eadnowe earne gelicast
on geogudhe nu gleawe geworden.
6. Hafast thu milde mod, mihta strange drihten,
domas eallum the deope her
and ful treaflice teonan tholian.
7. He his wegas dyde wise and cudhe
Moyse tham mæran on mænige tid;
Swylce his willan eac werum Israhela.
8. Mildheort thu eart and mihtig, mode gethyldig,
ece dryhten, swa thu a wære,
is thin milde mod mannum cydhed.
9. Nelle thu odh ende yrre habban,
ne on ecnesse the awa belgan.
10. Na thu be gewyrhtum, wealdend, urum
wommum wyrhtum woldest us don,
ne æfter urum unryhte awhær gyldan.

* He built it on the site of the great victory of Cenwealh, his uncle, if indeed King Centwine was his father.

11. Forthon thu æfter heahweorce heofenes thines
mildheortnysse mihtig drihten,
lustum cydhdest tham the lufedon the.
12. Swa thas foldan fædme bewindedh,
thes eastrodor and æfter west,
He betweonan tham teonan and unriht
us fram afyrde æghwær symble." *

* Mombert, *English Versions.*

CHAPTER VII

BEDE

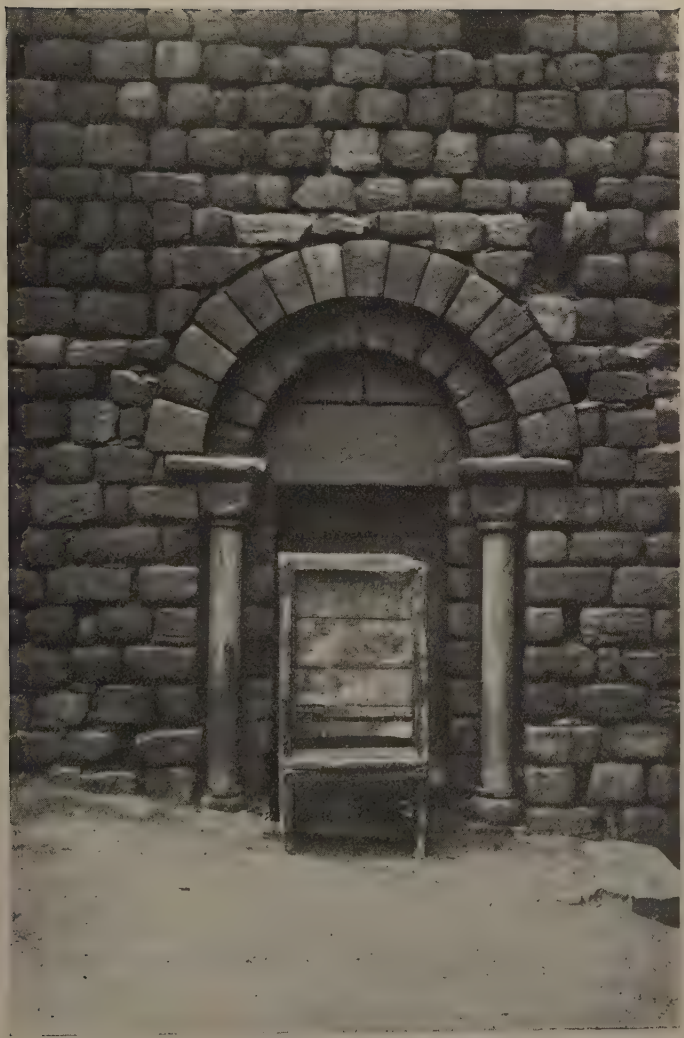
"It was always sweet to me to learn, to teach, to write."

"O Venerable Bede!
The saint, the scholar, from a circle freed
Of toil stupendous, in a hallowed seat
Of learning, where thou heardst the billows beat
On a wild coast, rough monitors to feed
Perpetual industry. Sublime recluse!
The recreant soul that dares to shun the debt
Imposed on human kind, must first forget
Thy diligence, thy unrelaxing use
Of a long life; and in the hour of death
The last dear service of thy passing breath."

WORDSWORTH.

By far the most conspicuous name belonging to this early age is that of Bede himself, whose *History* we have so often quoted, and who, amongst a great variety of labours, translated some portions of the Bible, and wrote Commentaries on nearly all. Such was his influence after death that, during the battles of the Heptarchy, his body was carried about in a bog oak coffin, much as was the Ark of ancient Jewish history; and subsequent ages have confirmed him in the high position thus superstitiously accorded. He was called Venerable, and there is a curious legend of the way in which he came by the name, which, however unlikely, shows how soon our forefathers looked suspiciously on Rome. It is said that, being there, he saw an iron gate, above which was written

P P P. S S S. R R R. F F F.,



THE VENERABLE BEDE'S CHAIR, JARROW CHURCH.

of which no one could give him the interpretation. Bede having stood for some time looking at this, a Roman, passing by, said, "What are you looking at, English bull?" "I am looking at what you ought to be ashamed of," replied Bede, at the same time interpreting the letters thus :—

"Pater patriæ perditus est;
Sapientia secum sublata;
Ruit Regnum Romæ,
Ferro, flamma, fame." *

Bede never set foot in Rome, however, and his claim to the title rests on a much securer basis. The tale would have suited Ceolfrid, his abbot, much better. He left his monastery at three days' notice once, and went, never to return. The tears and entreaties of his monks could not keep him, and from a skiff he gave them his last farewell, whilst they raised the cross and waved their burning tapers.

No, it was his multifarious labours and consequent eminence that led to Bede's being called Venerable. His *History* is our chief guide for the periods it treats of, and was translated by King Alfred; his expositions, homilies, treatises, and hymns were written by the score. He possessed a good knowledge of Latin and Greek, with some of Hebrew, and was such an enthusiast in his studies that he declined to be raised to the dignity of abbot, since he would then have had less leisure for his favourite pursuits. It came to be said, indeed, that though living in the remotest corner of Europe, he had compassed the whole in the range of his acquirements. His Homilies were read in his lifetime in the churches, a dignity accorded him alone, whence chiefly, say some, came his title, it being a middle between plain Bede, which they thought too little, and Saint Bede, which they thought too much, whilst he was still living.

* "Fallen is the father of this folk;
Learning leaves you likewise;
Ruined is the reign of Rome,
By war, want, and waste."

The "remote corner" in which he lived was Jarrow, on the banks of the Tyne, not a very picturesque district to the modern traveller. The crowded houses are half lost in reeks and vapours that kill everything about them except those that make them, as the old woman at the church said. It was very different, however, when King Egfrid founded the church and monastery here, A.D. 685, after a victory, and in fulfilment of a vow. Wearmouth and Jarrow were built almost together, and were remarkable for being built of stone, and glazed, so that they said it was never dark in old Jarrow Church. The presiding genius was a remarkable example of the power of early Christianity. Benedict Biscop was an officer of noble birth, in the service of Oswy, King of Northumberland, and was munificently rewarded for his military exploits. At the age of twenty-five, however, he entirely abandoned the world, and went to Rome. He was so much impressed that he soon went again, and would have taken the eldest son of the king, but this was not permitted. A fourth visit resulted in his bringing back books and other things of much value, and it was then that Egfrid, King of his native Northumberland, gave him a grant of seventy hides of land for a monastery at Monk Wearmouth. He got masons across from France, and had service within a year (A.D. 674). Soon afterwards (A.D. 682), Egfrid gave him forty hides at Jarrow. He went to Rome again, and brought back John, the arch chanter of the choir of St. Peter's there, who pricked out for them a course of music for the whole year. Some Scriptural paintings also accompanied the music, of which Bede says: "Thus the humble disciple, whose ignorance of letters excluded learning at one inlet, might feel his faith confirmed and his religious impressions strengthened by surveying, whithersoever he turned, either the gracious countenance of the Saviour, the awful mystery of the Incarnation, or the terrific scene of the Last Judgment."

When Benedict died, he besought them not to elect his brother, "who, as you know, walks in the way of the flesh," but to choose someone distinguished by piety and

BENEDICT BISCOP'S CHURCH (BUILT A.D. 684).

learning rather than by birth and rank. Ceolfrid, Abbot then of Jarrow, was appointed over both, and it was this Ceolfrid who took Bede when an orphan boy into the monastery. We are told that Ceolfrid, or Ceolfrith, having caused three copies to be made of the entire Bible, sent one as a present to the Pope, and placed the others in the two churches doubtless of his monasteries, "to the end that all who desired to read any chapter in either Testament might be able to find at once what they desired."

Bede was only seven years old then, but could sing in the choir, and begin to learn something. His own words are: "All my life I spent in that same monastery, giving my whole attention to the study of the Holy Scriptures; and in the intervals between the hours of regular discipline and the duties of singing in the church, I always took pleasure in learning, or teaching, or writing something." Boys in Saxon monasteries did not fare badly, as we know from a Colloquy * of the time. He had flesh meats, beans, fish, cheese, butter, and worts (kitchen herbs), and for fifty-two years he devoted himself to his quiet but influential labours. His sayings about the Scriptures are strong, as we should expect. "If anyone does not feed on the Word of God, he is dead" (Luke iv.). "As we cannot be perfectly free from vain thoughts, as far as we can we should drive them away by the introduction of good thoughts, and especially by frequent meditation on the Scriptures, according to the example of the Psalmist, who says, 'How do I love Thy law, O Lord; it is my meditation all the day.'"

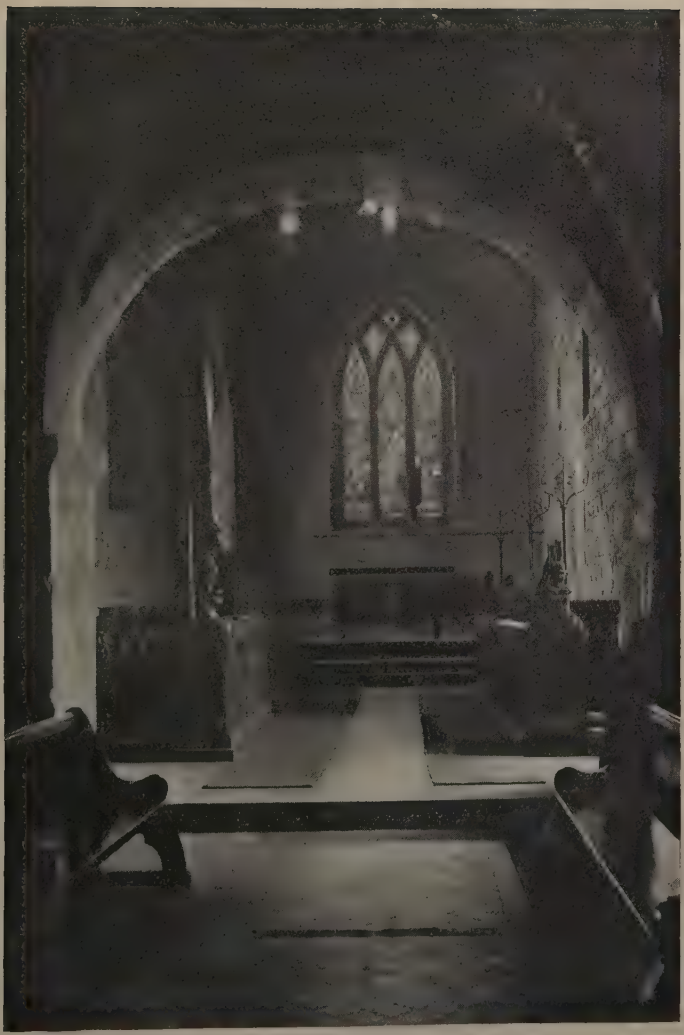
His Commentaries were mostly extracts from the Fathers, and comprised almost every book of the Bible. The Gospel of St. John is, however, the only direct translation of which we have any knowledge, and William of Malmesbury gives us this account of it:—

"Because this Gospel, by the difficulty that is in it, doth so much exercise the wits of the readers, therefore he did interpret it into the English tongue, and so did condescend to them which were not skilful in the Latin."

* *The Fathers for English Readers*, Rev. G. F. Brown, M.A.

He may have translated the Psalter also, however; and he writes to Egbert, when Primate of York, exhorting him to cause the Lord's Prayer and the Creed to be turned into Anglo-Saxon for the use of priests as well as the laity, and he appeals to his own example, for he had prepared such a translation for native teachers, ignorant of Latin. There was a little stone building in which he was wont to sit and meditate, and this was for a long time shown to those who visited the ruins. For writing his *History*, he had help from the Papal Library and from Saxon ecclesiastics in every kingdom of the Heptarchy, and it is a better performance than anything else of the period, though his credulity is seen in the admission of a number of idle tales. He dedicated it to King Ceolwulf, the successor of King Alfred, of Northumbria, the first Saxon prince who cultivated learning in those parts. And surely it was no idle compliment when he says it was the king's delight not only to hear the Scriptures read, but to be well acquainted with the deeds and sayings of his illustrious predecessors.

His sermons were addressed to the monastery, and thus contain little reference to the morals of the age. These were dreadful enough, however, and needed some refining and civilising influences, with a vengeance. Mr. Grant Allen says: "A single story from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle will sufficiently illustrate the type of men whose actions make up the history of these predatory times. In A.D. 754 King Cuthred, of the West Saxons, died. His kinsman Sigeberht succeeded him. One year later, however, Cynewulf and the Witan deprived Sigeberht of his kingdom, making over to him only the petty principality of Hampshire, while Cynewulf himself reigned in his stead. After a time Sigeberht murdered an alderman of his suite named Cymbra; whereupon Cynewulf deprived him of his remaining territory, and drove him forth into the Forest of the Weald. There he lived a wild life, till a herdsman met him in the forest, and stabbed him, to avenge the death of his master Cymbra. Cynewulf, in turn, after spending his days in fighting the Welsh,



JARROW CHURCH. SAXON CHANCEL.
THE VENERABLE BEDE'S CHAIR ON THE RIGHT.

lost his life in a quarrel with Cyneheard, brother of the outlawed Sigeberht. He had endeavoured to drive out the Atheling, but Cyneheard surprised him at Merton, and slew him, with all his thegns, except one Welsh hostage. Next day the king's friends, headed by the Alderman Osric, fell upon the Atheling, and killed him, with all his followers. In the very same year, Ethelbald, of Mercia, was killed fighting at Seckington; and Offa drove out his successor, Beornred. Of such murders, wars, surprises, and dynastic quarrels, the history of the eighth century is full, attesting the wholly ungoverned and ungovernable nature of the early English temper." *

It is a dreadful picture of Bede's century, but under the influence of men like him things began to improve. In Northumbria especially the pursuits of peace came to be followed more and more. They had one good Christian king after another, and with Lindisfarne, Jarrow, Monk-Wearmouth, Whitby, and York so near together, there was something of a Christian and literary centre for Western Europe. The famous Cuthbert's labours only closed when Bede was a boy of thirteen; and though he had an uncanny way of walking into the sea up to his neck, and remaining in it all night, he accomplished a great missionary work. Oswald, one of the early kings, used to act as interpreter to his missionary friend Aidan as he went about preaching, and once had his hand blessed by him, after some unusually kind act. York also we have mentioned, and to this belongs Alcuin, worthy of a more extended reference. England was in fact being Christianised, as we shall see more fully in the next chapter.

To return, however, to Bede, what a remarkable figure he presents for such an untutored age! No Early Church has anything like him to produce. A very short time before his era all was Pagan. It was worse, indeed, for Christianity itself had been vanquished. Forty years before his birth the king had abjured the Faith of Christ, after having been nominally a Christian. Then, not only

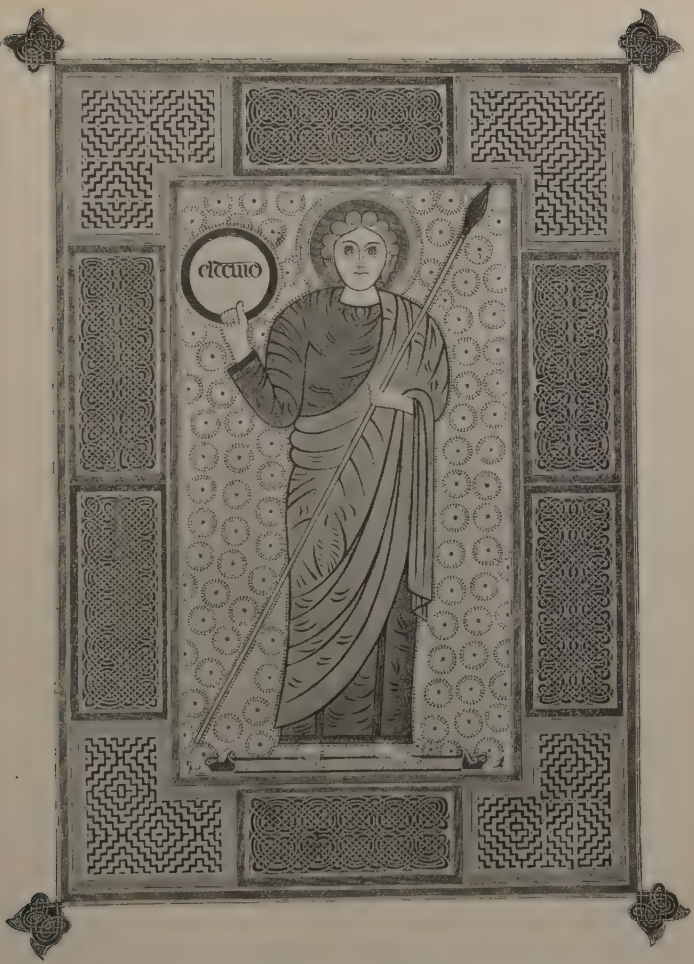
* *Anglo-Saxon Britain.*

did kings become nursing-fathers to the infant Church,—giving lands too profuse indeed for their purpose, and not taken, as Bede significantly remarks, from others,—but the Faith of Christ was largely accepted by the people. There were soon six hundred monks at Jarrow, and Bede quickly gathered into himself all the knowledge of the time. This child of Pagan parents, this dweller in a remote corner of the earth, knew his Bible better than most of us do in these days of civilisation, and drew together nearly everything of value that had been said upon its various books. He went on to the classics, and could quote Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, Cicero, Lucretius, and Virgil. Whatever little knowledge of physics there was he mastered, and first amongst English theologians, historians, and scholars it is in the monk of Jarrow that English literature strikes its roots.*

He was a plain priest from his thirtieth year to the end, and doubtless performed his ordinary duties. What they were we may gather partly from a later Saxon exhortation :—"Priests! you ought to be well provided with books and apparel, as suits your condition. The Mass Priest should at least have his missal, his singing-book, his reading-book, his Psalter, his hand-book, his penitential, and his numeral one. . . . Take care that you be better and wiser in your spiritual craft than worldly men are in theirs, that you may be fit teachers of true wisdom. The priest should preach rightly the true belief; read fit discourses; visit the sick; and baptize infants. No one should be a covetous trader, nor a plunderer, nor drink often in wine-houses, nor be proud or boastful, nor wear ostentatious girdles, nor be adorned with gold, but do honour to himself by his good morals." †

The extract has a Catholic ring about it, but we must not disguise for a moment the fact that Rome was in these days folding England beneath her wing. There was a Synod at Whitby in A.D. 664 which went in favour of Rome with regard to some matters in dispute between the more

* *History of the English People*, Green.
† Wilkins's *Leges Anglo-Saxonica.*



DAVID, AS WARRIOR.

MS. TRADITIONALLY ASCRIBED TO BÆDA, IN DURHAM CATHEDRAL LIBRARY.

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ancient Culdee Christians and those who followed the Roman usages. Four years later, Theodore and Hadrian came, and the result of their long labours in the same direction was lasting. The very monasteries founded by the Culdees at Lindisfarne and elsewhere passed over to the Romish party. Cuthbert, in the succession of Aidan and Columba, lay dying in his little Hermitage, near Lindisfarne, in A.D. 687. When he died, a signal was given to a monk looking out from the watchtower, and when the light flashed over the two miles of water, he hurried in to the brethren, who were singing. They had just reached "Thou hast cast us out, and scattered us abroad; Thou hast also been displeased; Thou hast given us a drink of deadly wine." It was the dirge not of Cuthbert, who accepted Roman ways, but of his Church and people. The earlier movement, vigorous and productive as it had been, became absorbed in the mightier one whose seat was amongst the Seven Hills.*

The remains of the monastery where Bede studied, and possibly the chair which he used, are still to be seen at Jarrow by those who care for such memorabilia. The chancel is the part that is Saxon, and is about forty feet long. There is a beautiful window describing the death scene, which has become so celebrated that we almost hesitate to give it again at length. Our sketch of Bede would be very imperfect without it, however, and it is touchingly given by an eye-witness and disciple. He was only in his fifty-ninth year when he began to fail, his death being due probably to his sedentary occupation. About a fortnight before Easter A.D. 735, he was greatly troubled with shortness of breath, but was mercifully without much pain. He lingered for some weeks, and died on Ascension Day. Continually he was giving thanks to God, and singing psalms. Many times also he repeated, "God scourgeth every son whom He receiveth," and sang

* Green's *History of the English People*. Doubtless, as Ranke says, Rome so soon had sway here because men wished to belong to the great Church communion which then, in still unbroken freedom, comprehended the most distant nations.

some English verses in the Northumbrian dialect, which have been rendered as follows:—

"Ere the pilgrim soul go forth
On its journey, far and lone,
Who is he that yet on earth
All his needful part hath done!

Who foreweighs the joy or scathe
That his parted ghost shall know;
Endless when the day of death
Seals his doom for weal or woe."

Much out of the Scripture, indeed, he repeated, as also this sentence from St. Ambrose: "I have not lived so as to be ashamed to live amongst you; nor do I fear to die, because we have a gracious God." During these days he laboured in translating the Gospel of John, and some collections out of the book of notes of Bishop Isidorus, saying, "I will not have my pupils read a falsehood, nor labour therein without profit after my death." It is possible that he had in his hands the manuscript of St. John's Gospel sent by Gregory the Great to Augustine, and which is still to be seen in the Bodleian Library as one of its most precious treasures. Two days before his death, he said to the young monk who was writing at his dictation—

"Go on quickly; I know not how long I shall hold out, and whether my Maker will not take me away." On the next day one said to him, "Most dear Master, there is still one chapter wanting; do you think it troublesome to be asked any more questions?" "It is no trouble," was the reply; "take your pen and make ready, and write fast." *

At three o'clock on Ascension Day he bethought him that he had some little things he would like to give his friends before he died. They were only pepper, napkins, and incense, but he distributed them, begging them to say prayers for him. "It is time," he said, "that I returned to Him who formed me out of nothing. My

* So says the clock at Woolwich Dockyard—"fugio—fugi."

DAVID, AS PSALMIST.

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merciful Judge well foresaw my life for me. The time of my dissolution draws nigh, for I desire to die and to be with Christ." As the night drew on, his boy-scribe said, "Dear Master, there is yet one sentence not written." He gave it him, and on the Gospel being thus finished, he said, "It is well. You have said the truth. It is ended. Receive my head into your hands, for it is a great satisfaction to me to sit facing my holy place, where I was wont to pray, that I may also, sitting, call upon my

THE PRIORY RUINS, HOLY ISLAND. VIEW LOOKING EAST.

Father." And thus, on the pavement of his little cell, singing, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost," when he had named the Holy Ghost, he breathed his last, and so departed to the Heavenly Kingdom.

This was the sentence, but we can scarcely be expected to recognise our own language :—

"Witodlice odhre manega thing synd dhe sc Hoeland worhte gif dha ealle a writene woeron, ic wene ni mihte dhes middaneard ealla dha bic befon."

So doubtless the prayer with which he closes his *History*

was answered: "And now, I beseech Thee, good Jesus, that to whom Thou hast graciously granted sweetly to partake of the words of Thy wisdom and knowledge, Thou wilt also vouchsafe that he may some time or other come to Thee, the Fountain of all wisdom, and always appear before Thy face, who livest and reignest, world without end."

Bede was buried at the monastery where he had lived his life, close by the Tyne,

> "Most like the drowsy flood which poets feign
> Dark Styx, with wreaths of moistful osiers hung."

About four hundred years after his death, however, his bones were removed to Durham, where Hugh Pudsey, then Bishop of that see, had them enclosed in a casket of gold and silver, and placed in the chapel at the western end of the Cathedral, under a plain slab, on which are the words, "Hic sunt in fossa Bedæ Venerabilis ossa." Another legend of his name is connected with this. It is said that the writer of the inscription was unable to find a suitable adjective. He thought of holy, pious, and other epithets, but they did not seem sufficiently expressive. Night came, and in the morning he was still puzzled. When he went to look, however, someone had inserted the word "Venerable," which was exactly what he wanted. Bede was called Venerable and Admirable, however, by the Second Council of Aix-la-Chapelle, about a century after his death, and, however he got it, it has stuck to him as much as "Judicious" and "Admirable" to Hooker and Crichton. In the Middle Ages, indeed, such titles displaced the actual names of writers of distinction, and the "Angelic Doctor," the "Seraphic Doctor," etc., were quoted under those names alone.

Cuthbert lies beside Bede at Durham; and Fuller tells us that a foreign ambassador, some long time after their burial, coming there, addressed himself first to the high and sumptuous shrine of Cuthbert, saying, "If thou art a saint, pray for me." Then coming to the plain and

small tomb of Bede, "Because," said he, "thou art a saint, pray for me."

The Jarrow monastery was soon destroyed by the Danes. Fifty years after Bede's death they came and anchored just outside it. They came again later on, and it remained in abandoned desolation for a couple of centuries. Soon after the Norman Conquest, however, it had another brief spasm of life, but it was only brief. In 1083 the monks finally moved away to Durham, and

INTERIOR OF ST. MARY'S PARISH CHURCH, HOLY ISLAND.

it became a small affair, dependent on the monastery of St. Cuthbert. To-day huge iron ships are being built nearly under its shadow, and there is an almost unceasing din of hammers amid a forest of furnaces. And yet, in spite of Danish destructions, Norman neglect, and incongruous surroundings, the very chair Bede sat in lasts on, a piece of the church in which he sat, and its dedication-stone, with Ceolfrid's name upon it, recalling the time when he, with a party of seventeen monks, was sent to found it.

Bede was a broad-minded man, keeping his heart open to all influences for good, whether they came from

Iona or Rome, Canterbury or Gaul. He condemned the cruel and foolish war made by Ecgfrith, the benefactor of his monastery, against the Irish Scots, and narrated ungrudgingly the good deeds of Wilfrid. He held with Rome as to the date of Easter and the form of the tonsure, but dwelt much on the holiness of Aidan, and wrote the Life of Cuthbert both in prose and verse.

Wilfrid was eager but narrow-minded, and looked on Cuthbert and John of Beverley as intruders. To Bede they were saints, and he resents Wilfrid's driving out of Eata and Cuthbert from Ripon to make room for him. He had a somewhat high view of the Sacrament, but certainly not the transubstantiation taught later on by Radbert, and into which the Romish Church was beguiled.

Thirty-seven of his works are described by the Rev. Wm. Hunt, and being compiled largely from the Fathers, they are full of allegory. Even Tobit is made to teach something about Christ and the Sacraments, and the six waterpots of Cana are the six ages of the world!

He loved his work, and never wandered away from his Northern home, or was absent from its means of grace. He would say, "I know that angels visit the Congregation, and what if they should not find me! Would they not say, 'Where is Bede?'"

When he was a boy the angels might have found him almost alone. Food was so poor, and sanitary matters so neglected, that the pestilence often walked in darkness, and destruction at noonday. It so thinned the brotherhood at Jarrow in Bede's early life, that there was not one monk left who could take up the responses with the Abbot. For a week this went on, until the dreariness of it could be borne no longer; and after that, Abbot and child laboured day by day through the customary service.

A national memorial to the Venerable Bede has lately been erected on the Cliff at Roker, Sunderland. It is a beautifully sculptured Saxon cross, twenty-five feet high, and was erected in clean and pure air, where it will be seen by the holiday population of Wear and Tyne. In

THE VENERABLE BEDE DICTATING THE LAST WORDS OF HIS TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE.

the sculpture there are scroll patterns from the Lindisfarne Gospels, extracts from his works, busts of his friends and associates; and to illustrate his love of nature, a scroll introducing birds and animals, springing from a harp, emblematic of his poetic gifts. There was a significant ceremony, largely attended, on 11th October 1904, when the Archbishop of York handed over the cross to the town, saying it was the memorial of a great scholar, a great historian, a great theologian, and a great lover and interpreter of the Word of God, and one who, in the highest sense, was a man of God.

BEDE'S TOMB IN DURHAM CATHEDRAL.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH CENTURIES—ALCUIN

"Such a man
Might be a copy to these younger times."

During these centuries there can be no doubt that Anglo-Saxon Britain was won for Christ. The conquering were conquered; the "life-full Word" swept out of the land the superstitions that had been brought into it. And the spiritual conquest was much the faster of the two, though there was many a discouraging season. It took even the fierce Saxons a long time to conquer England, for they had to contend with a people in most respects superior to themselves, a Christian people, with schools, poetry, music, and something of the Roman civilisation. It was only their brave and unwearied hardihood that prevailed, and this they had been trained to through a long history of struggle.

Even then it took them a long time. It was A.D. 688 before Ina became the first Legislator-King of the whole of the West Saxons. Two hundred and thirty-nine years had elapsed since the first Saxons came to Thanet, and one hundred and ninety-three since the first landing of the West Saxons. It was one hundred and eleven years since the great conquests of Ceawlin westwards, and ninety-one since the mission of Augustine to the Kentish Bretwalda.*

The progress of Christianity was much more rapid. Every part of the land received the truth within about eighty-two years. The conversion of Kent was begun

* Lappenberg.

in A.D. 596; Essex received the truth from Mellitus in 604, and from Cedda, Bishop of Tilbury, in 653; Northumbria from Paulinus in 627, and from the Culdees in 635; East Anglia from Felix, a Burgundian, in 631; Wessex from Birinus of Genoa in 633; Mercia and the Middle Angles from the Culdees and their disciples in 653; Sussex, last of all, from Bishop Wilfrid in 681.

What a mercy these Saxons were laid hold of by Christianity almost before they were well settled in the land, for they were a fierce, wild race, neither liberal nor just, neither wise nor virtuous. On the contrary, they were the most barbarous, selfish, and bloodthirsty of the European peoples. Fire and sword! no mere conquest, but a driving and killing out of the population they found, was their motto. As Gildas says, with Celtic eloquence, "The red tongue of flame licked up the whole land from end to end till it slaked its horrid thirst in the Western Ocean." And their "religion" helped them on. Its most formidable feature, as of all the Teutonic nations, was its neglect of the pure and benevolent virtues of life, and its indissoluble union with war and violence. It represented their Supreme Deity as the father of combats and slaughter, those being always his favourite children who fell in the field of battle. To them he assigned the Heavenly Valhall and Vingolfa, and promised to salute them after their death as heroes.

The sanguinary sacrifices, wild rites, and turbulent festivals of the mythology of Odin, however, were better suited to the native regions of our Saxon conquerors than to the gay greenwood and more tranquil atmosphere of Britain. The Christian religion, with its order, humanity, and peace, appealed to them when they settled down, and it was well for them to become naturalised in the established Faith of the civilised world around them.

The Christian conquest was won more by the Culdees from Iona than the monks and priests from Rome. Indeed, the little kingdom of Kent, with its bishoprics of Canterbury and Rochester, was the only part of the island permanently converted by Augustine and his band.

It was the handful of Scots that principally did the work; and well may Froude say that, except the Athenians and the Jews, no people so few in number have made so deep an impression on history as the Scots.

Montalembert sums up their work by saying that of the eight Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, four were wholly and two partially Christianised by Scottish missionaries; and Lightfoot, with all his natural leanings the other way, exclaims that Augustine of Canterbury was the Apostle of Kent, but that Aidan of Iona was the Apostle of England.*

It was a moral conquest, however, by whomsoever wrought. Charlemagne compelled the Saxons in Germany to enter the Christian pale, with the sword at their throats, and, later on, King Alfred did little better with the Danish Guthrum.

Our own Saxon forefathers were simply persuaded by Biblical truth; and thus they loved their new Faith more, and kept it more steadfastly afterwards, though they often wavered a little at first.† Ceadwalla was the only English king that ever tried to turn people to the Gospel of peace by the sword of war.

Of course they wavered a little at first. The old Heathenism was not likely to be banished without many a struggle, and sometimes it won its way back again for a brief season, after Christianity had been introduced. These English Saxons were the one purely German nation that rose upon the wreck of Rome, and originally their hate burnt fiercest against Churches, and all that had to do with them. But they were won by truth and kindness, and finally held when they were won. Look at the closing scene in this mild conquest, when Wilfrid went down to Sussex in A.D. 678. He found a small monastery already established at Bosham, near Chichester, but it had little influence. The poor monks lived within their walls, and sang their psalms like the Pilgrim Fathers in New England—

> "Amidst the woods they sang,
> And the stars heard them, and the sea."

* *Baird Lecture.*

† *Early England*, F. Y. Powell.

When Wilfrid went, the people were so miserable through their poverty that they used to join hands, forty or fifty together, and throw themselves over the cliffs into the sea.* Wilfrid began by teaching them how to go out fishing, which they soon learnt under his instruction, catching on one occasion three hundred fish at a draught. It was a good preparation for missionary teaching, and the one net so cleared the way for the other that the last piece of England was speedily won for Christ.

Amongst the most potent influences were those which streamed from the labours of Theodore and Hadrian, more than once referred to. They came over together in the middle of the seventh century, and both as Bible-teachers and classical masters, as organisers and Romanists, they cut a deep mark into the England of this early time. Theodore was a native of Tarsus, and a monk at Rome. Hadrian was an African, and the abbot of a monastery near Naples, and when the archbishopric of Canterbury was offered to him, he begged that it might be given to Theodore instead, he promising to accompany him. They came together, escorted to Canterbury by Benedict Biscop, who had formed their acquaintance on a visit to Rome; the Asiatic monk, with the African counsellor, to preside over a Saxon Church, to the language and manners of which they were utter strangers. They worked together for twenty-one years; and when Theodore passed away, Hadrian continued to direct the affairs of the monastery at Canterbury for eighteen more. Both were good Greek and Latin scholars, as well as being well versed in Biblical and sacred literature. With portions of the Scriptures, they brought Homer, Josephus, Chrysostom, and many of the Latin writers. They taught as well as preached, establishing schools for languages, arithmetic, astronomy, and music, and enjoining all parents to see that their children were taught to say the Creed and the Lord's Prayer in the vulgar tongue.

It was largely through their influence that England, though chiefly converted by Culdee missionaries, came to

* *English Church*, Churton.

acknowledge Rome. Augustine had been too high and haughty with the remains of the British Church which he found in the land. In the West they were neither few nor feeble, and a very few years before his arrival there had been Bishop Theonas at Lincoln, and Bishop Thadioc at York.

He should have treated the survivors of an early and interesting Christian Church with great consideration, but instead of that he used high words, and the breach was so complete that, in the time of his successor, a certain Scottish prelate, Dagan by name, passing through Canterbury, refused to eat in the same house with the "Italian Christians." The bishops in Wales, indeed, continued to hold themselves independent of Canterbury and all its doings down to the commencement of the twelfth century. Their Church was only finally absorbed into the English Church when the Welsh State was absorbed, at the end of the thirteenth century.

Theodore and Hadrian acted more judiciously. Once Theodore went with Egfrid, King of Northumberland, to Cuthbert, then living as a recluse on Farne Island, and begged him on bended knee to accept the bishopric of that part, which he did. Cuthbert was a Culdee, though he had before this agreed with Rome on matters frequently debated. In 673 Theodore's Canons were accepted at Hertford, and Roman practices in consequence came to be generally adopted.

This was the time, too, when the "life-full Word" was securing its natural home. Theodore and Hadrian found scarcely any churches, or residences of single ministers. According to the laws of Athelstan, a thane's rank might be obtained by a Saxon churl or franklin, if he possessed about five hundred acres of land, if he was entitled to a place in the Council of the Wise, and if he had a church with a bell-tower on his estate. This doubtless was a great stimulus to the building of churches, and they soon became numerous, though plain enough. In Northamptonshire, at the Conquest, there were sixty village churches, though it was thinly inhabited; and the county

town had more than it has now. In Derbyshire there were about fifty, and five in the county town. In Lincolnshire there were more than two hundred village churches, populous and thriving as it was before the Conquest.

Theodore arranged that the thanes, or country gentlemen, who built churches on their estates should be allowed to pay a portion of the tithes to the priest of their own church, instead of paying all to the Minster or Cathedral.

What a remarkable figure also Alcuin presents! Egbert, one of Bede's scholars, became Archbishop of York, and founded a school and library there, over which Alcuin was appointed librarian. A poem of the eleventh century says that he translated the Pentateuch, and his love for the Scriptures is seen in the following letter, addressed to a friend:—"I wish the four Gospels, instead of the twelve Æneids, filled your breast. Be studious in reading the Sacred Writings; study Christ as foretold in the books of the Prophets, and as exhibited in the Gospels; and when you find Him, do not lose Him, but introduce Him into the home of thy heart, and make Him the ruler of thy life. Love Him as thy Redeemer and thy Governor, and as the Dispenser of all thy comforts. Keep His commandments, because in them is Eternal Life." He found that copies of the Scriptures and of Service Books had in many places disappeared altogether, and in others the copies were inferior and incorrect. He examined some of the best manuscripts, acted as a reviser, and then had them copied in large numbers, and the copies sent out to cathedrals and important churches and abbeys, where they were still further multiplied.* Certainly,

* It was at Charlemagne's request that he undertook this. The simultaneous use of the old Latin and Jerome's new version was harmful. He restored the original readings of Jerome, in a great measure, and splendid MSS. remain which claim to be directly derived from Alcuin's own revision, one of the finest of these being amongst the chief treasures of the British Museum Library, and known as Charlemagne's Bible.—*Bible in the Church*, Westcott.

He presented the Emperor Charlemagne with a copy of the Revised

such a piece of information looks as if there were a much larger circulation of the Scriptures than we have any knowledge of. Alcuin was a good scholar at York in the eighth century, long before Oxford or Cambridge had been heard of. The school there and library were by no means small affairs, Egbert continuing to teach after he became archbishop. Besides the Scriptures, there was some instruction in rhetoric, jurisprudence, poetry, astronomy, natural history, and mathematics. Nothing equal to it was to be found in Gaul or Spain, and we have a complete list of the classics in the library after which Alcuin sighed when living abroad afterwards. The great merit of such men lay in acquiring, preserving, and teaching the knowledge which other times and countries had produced. They separated its best parts from the lumber and mere verbiage with which they were connected; and had it not been for a succession of them, Europe would have become what Turkey is, and mankind would now be slowly emerging into the infancy of literature and science. This York scholar became the personal friend and adviser of Charlemagne, the greatest sovereign of the time, and enjoyed imperial confidence to a degree rarely experienced by literature. It was when he was sent on an embassy from King Offa to Rome, in A.D. 782, that he met Charlemagne at Pavia, who begged him to take the leadership of the palatial school he had founded for the sons of Frankish noblemen. He thus became one of the most prominent members of that circle of great men which, with Charlemagne as its centre, stood at the head of the whole religious and civilising movement of the age.

The emperor employed him several times on political missions, but his proper place was as the religious counsellor of the king, and in this field his influence was decisive. In 790 he went to France, and settled there, retiring

Text when he was made Emperor of Rome, saying: "Nothing appeared more worthy of your peaceful Honour than the gift of the Sacred Scriptures, which by the dictation of the Holy Ghost and the mediation of Christ God were written with the pen of celestial grace for the salvation of mankind."—*Historical Curiosities*, C. J. Smith.

MOSES GIVING THE LAW (ALCUIN'S BIBLE).

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to the Abbey of St. Martin at Tours, where he died in A.D. 804. Whilst the emperor delighted to honour him, he had a large retinue, and was blamed once by a Spanish ecclesiastic for the number of his servants. He did not contradict the fact, but denied that it had corrupted his simplicity, saying, "It is one thing to possess the world; it is another to be possessed by it." In fact, to the end, he always called himself "the humble Levite." Thus, as Peter Ramus has said, Britain was twice schoolmistress to France: first by the Druids, and then by this York scholar, whose name was Latinised to Flaccus Albinus. He was a poet as well as a scholar, and sometimes rhymes in his Latin verses, of one of which this is a translation:—

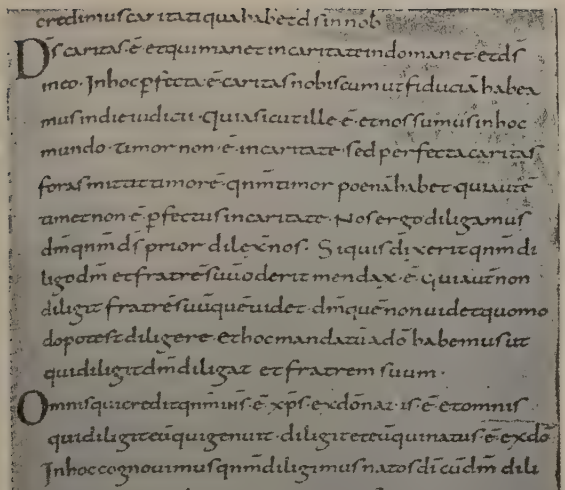
THE HOUSE OF GOD.

"Who seeks to enter Heaven's expanded Gates
Must oft within these sacred walls attend;
Here is the Gate of everlasting bliss,
The path of light, of pardon, and of peace,
The House of God, the treasures of His power,
And numerous relics of the holiest men.
With mind devoted, traveller, enter here,
Here spread your limbs, and fill your heart with Heaven;
Here sacred hopes, here God Himself awaits thee,
If steadfast faith thy humble mind control."

We have said that the distribution of the Scriptures may have been much larger than is often imagined at this time, and the following extract from one of Alcuin's sermons looks like it. He says: "The reading of the Scriptures is the knowledge of everlasting blessedness. In them man may contemplate himself as in some mirror, what sort of person he is. The reading cleanseth the reader's soul, for, when we pray, we speak to God, and when we read the Holy Books, God speaks to us. It is a twofold joy which the reading of the Holy Books bringeth to the readers, first that it so instructs their understanding as to render them sharper, and also that it leads them from the world's vanities to the living God."

Alcuin had an idea which Charlemagne went far to accomplish. It was that of a Christian State, in which religion was supreme, but in which whatsoever things are venerable find a place. The emperor was to establish in the middle of Europe a new Athens, of a higher stamp, in which Christ was the Master of the Academy, and all true art and science harmonious with the septuple fulness of the Holy Spirit. Classical learning was by no means to be forsaken for theology, for classical and religious traditions inhere together, and by combining them the Christian Church becomes the true guardian of civilisation. Many of his letters have been preserved, and after he had settled down at Tours in comparative retirement, he writes to his emperor-master: "According to your exhortations and kind wish, I endeavour to administer in the schools of St. Martin to some the honey of the Sacred Writings; I try to inebriate others with the wine of the ancient classics; I begin to nourish some with the apples of grammatical subtlety; I strive to illuminate many by the arrangement of the stars, as from the painted roof of a lofty palace. But I want those more exquisite books of scholastic erudition which I had in my own country. May it then please your wisdom that I send some of our youths to procure what we need; and to convey into France the flowers of Britain, that they may not be locked up in York only, but that their fragrance and fruit may adorn at Tours the gardens and streams of the Loire."* It is Gale that lets us know what these flowers of Britain were, and the catalogue is worth reproducing, as showing what an eighth-century library in a far-away island, lately savage, could be. Of the ancient Fathers, there were Jerome, Hilarius, Ambrose, Augustine,

* It is an entire mistake that Bede was Alcuin's master. Alcuin was not born till the year after Bede had died. The supposed connection depends upon a double coincidence of names. Venerable Bede had a contemporary called Albinus (a name by which Alcuin was known), and in Charlemagne's time Alcuin had a contemporary called Bede. There was this connection, however, Alcuin wrote a letter to the monks at Jarrow extolling Bede as a student and writer, and urging them to imitate his good example.



ALCUIN'S VULGATE, NINTH CENTURY.
REDUCED FACSIMILE OF A PORTION OF A PAGE.

Athanasius, Gregory, Leo, Fulgentius, Basil, Chrysostom, Lactantius, Eutychius, Clemens, and Paulinus. Of the classics, there were Aristotle, Pliny, Cicero, Virgil, Statius, Lucan, Boethius, Cassiodorus, Orosius, and Pompeius. Of ancient grammarians and scholiasts, there were Probus, Donatus, Priscian, Servius, and Comminianus. Of other poets, there were Victorinus, Sedulius, Juvencus, Fortunatus, Prosper, and Arator. Here is Alcuin's inscription for his Scriptorium at Tours :—

> "Write then the sacred books, 'tis now a deed
> Of noblest worth, which never lacks its meed.
> 'Tis better in transcribing books to toil,
> Than vines to culture, and to delve the soil;
> Since he who lives to meaner works confined
> May serve his body, but this feeds his mind.
> Yet, whatsoe'er thou writest, old or new,
> Some master work should be brought forth to view;
> The praise of numbers on such labours fall,
> The Fathers of the Church are read by all." *

Such a library was evidently remarkable, however, and there were very few books of any kind in England in these early times, and very few who could read them. It was not necessary for the ordinary operations of life. Commerce was carried on principally by truck or barter, or by payments in ready money, and sums were cast up, as amongst the Romans, upon an abacus, or accounting-table, the amount being denoted by counters. A piece of land could be bought as easily as a horse. The owner cut a turf from the greensward, and cast it in the lap of the purchaser, as a token that the possession was transferred; or he tore off the branch of a tree and put it in the hand of the grantee, to show that the latter was to be entitled to all the products of the soil. And when the purchasers of a house came into possession, the key of the door, or a bundle of thatch plucked from the roof, signified that the dwelling had been given up to them. All nations were almost equally illiterate, and it is scarcely more than in our own time that books and literature

* *Historical Curiosities*, C. J. Smith.

have become the property of the mass of the people. Bede and Alcuin may be compared with any other authors who appeared after the third century.

There were few books in the Manuscript age, except at Rome and other favoured centres, compared with the mighty mass which printing has introduced. And yet printing itself was not altogether unknown. Stamps, with raised letters, very much like our printing types, only unmovable, by which the Romans produced short inscriptions, are yet extant. Tradesmen employed such stamps for printing the labels of their wares. The silver letters of the Codex Argenteus, the volume containing the version of the Gospels made by Ulfilas, Bishop of the Mœso-Goths, were possibly produced by types employed to fix the leaf upon the purple parchment, nearly in the manner now practised by bookbinders. In China, block printing came into active operation within what we call the Dark Ages, and Roger Bacon, who had received much information concerning China, describes the process quite plainly. But, for Europe, the hour was not yet come ; we were so near and yet so far from the mightiest discovery.

CHAPTER IX

MONASTICS AND MISSIONARIES

"I do not wonder that, where the monastic life is permitted, every order finds votaries, and every monastery inhabitants. Men will submit to any rule by which they will be exempted from the tyranny of caprice and chance. They are glad to supply by external authority their own want of constancy and resolution, and court the government of others, when experience has convinced them of their inability to govern themselves."—Dr. Johnson.

Coleridge once said that to write the true history of the Bible and its influence in England was almost to write the history of England itself, and at least it would be a very imperfect sketch of this period which did not include something a little fuller about monastics and missionaries. They seem to be very diverse, but often they were identical. The monastic found a quiet home for the Word of God; the missionary spread abroad its influence. But it was monks that brought the Bible to Thanet when Ethelbert was Bretwalda, and refounded Christianity in the southern parts of the island; and often the monk broke away from his "gray set life," and went, Testament in hand, to the Heathen.

Commonly, however, they stayed where they were, and in spite of Dr. Johnson's dictum at the head of this chapter, we are by no means to look upon the monastic life of this early period as an unmixed evil. In the monastery the Scriptures were copied, sometimes very beautifully. The "Scriptorium," where this was done, was often no mere cell, and was seldom empty. Expositions were gathered together; books of devotion grew out

of such toil ; and preaching and services were constant. Most commonly in this early period there was peace, and order, and good life. Ariosto, later on, represents an angel receiving a commission to send peace into the Christian host, and discord among the Pagans. The angel, starting on his journey, came to a monastery, and went in, but great was his surprise to find the monks quarrelling most vehemently, and hurling candlesticks at one another, whilst on one of the rafters he found Discord perched in the form of the bird of darkness. On the contrary, some of the early monasteries present a beautiful picture of harmony, labour, and prayer, with the newly found truth in the centre of all.

There were great differences, even amongst the Benedictines, who came first. At Canterbury, not a century after Augustine, an almost classical course of study was combined with practical theology under Hadrian, as we have seen, and at Bede's monastery in the North the richest fruits of all sorts of useful knowledge were being gathered. At others, they devoted themselves more to the cultivation of the soil, as at Abingdon. Buckle says, however, that where the classics were studied, it was with fear and trembling; and well it might be, considering what some of them are. They never turned the leaves of a Pagan author without dreading lest, by imbibing some of his opinions, they should involve themselves in a deadly sin.

The fanatic frowning on the marriage state worked as most things "righteous overmuch" do. Pius II. declared that, for very good reasons, priests had been forbidden to marry, but that, for still better ones, it ought to be allowed them. However, their state of single blessedness gave a large opportunity for literary work of any sort, and we may perhaps be surprised that translations of the Scriptures did not abound. Whilst they were constantly copied, however, in their Latin form, they were rarely translated, and this was the case throughout Europe generally. There was a prejudice against the employment of vernacular tongues as written languages.

The dialects of Gaul, and Spain, and Italy were broken Latin, or the dialects into which it had been corrupted. Spanish has been described as such Latin as might have been heard from the mouth of a sulky slave. By cultivation, irregular dialects have acquired beauty; but to the learned these patois must have sounded almost as ludicrous as the talkee-talkee of our negroes in the Colonies, to which they bear some analogy. Discourses were necessarily delivered from the pulpit in this rustic tongue, but it was a different thing to employ such a jargon in a literary production.

Such was the case in the Romanised countries, but there is a difference when we turn to the Teutonic peoples who retained their nationalities. They delighted in their old expressive mother tongue. Their speech was a token of nobility and superiority; and the power and regularity of their forms enabled the writers, when they had become acquainted with the grammarians of Greece and Rome, to treat their Gothic or Saxon with the same precision as the cultivated languages. Thus Ulfilas, Bishop of the Mœso-Goths, made his valuable translation of the New Testament. The Teutonic nations also were accustomed to look on poetry as a means of instruction. The rhythm helped the memory of the learner, and the freedom of the composition enabled the translator to produce a more intelligible version than he could otherwise have effected.*

If translations of any sort were rare, however, we may be thankful for the universal Latin tongue, and for Jerome's Vulgate, which could be read, at all events by a great many, in every country. The Romans had diffused their language as their conquests and colonies spread, but it would probably have perished when the Gothic hordes destroyed their empire, if Christianity had not preserved it. The German tribes were successively converted, and public worship was everywhere in Latin. The Fathers of the Church wrote in Latin. The ecclesiastics of Germany, France, Britain, Spain, Ireland, and

* Palgrave.

Italy could readily correspond in this. Thus a necessary attachment to the Latin authors obtained, and the classics were, though tremulously, preserved by the clergy, and their influence, from that destruction which has swept away from us the writings of Phœnicia, Carthage, Babylon, and Egypt.

Monastic life soon became fashionable, and not less so pilgrimages to Rome, often ending in permanent residence there. The widowed queen of Edwin took the veil. Oswy devoted his daughter Elfleda to a convent. In 688 Ceadwalla travelled to Rome on a pilgrimage of piety, where he was baptized by the Pope, and died, before he was thirty, in the following week. In 709 Cenred of Mercia and Offa of Essex, probably affected by the example of Ceadwalla, went to Rome, and became monks there. Thus Ina of Wessex, as Sharon Turner says, obeyed the same impression, took the same journey, and found his grave in the same venerated city. An old chronicler tells us that the examples of these kings produced a thousand imitations.

Æthelwulph, the great Alfred's father, paid Rome back somewhat liberally. He sent Alfred to Rome, when only four, to be crowned. He went himself two years later, taking Alfred again. He made over the tithes, with the sanction of the Witenagemot. He was most profuse in his gifts, indeed, bestowing gold upon all the Roman clergy and nobles, and silver upon the people. As for the Pope, he gave him a crown of pure gold, weighing four pounds, which must have given him a bad headache, if he ever wore it; two golden vessels, called Baucas; a sword adorned with pure gold; two golden images; and four Saxon dishes, besides valuable dresses.

Certainly, the monastic system was very early weighed in the balances, and found wanting. As we have seen, it was only in A.D. 747 that the Council of Cloveshoe, or Cliff's Hoe, in Kent, had to say some very plain things. The convents were not to be turned into places of amusement for harpers and buffoons, and laymen were not to have too free access to them, lest they should be scandal-

ised at what they saw. Long before Giraldus Cambrensis told the world how the monks of Canterbury had turned from fasting to the most luxurious feasting, there was plenty of high living, and a good deal worse.

> "Round many a Convent's blazing fire
> Unhallowed threads of revelry are spun:
> There Venus sits disguiséd like a nun:—
> While Bacchus, clothed in semblance of a friar,
> Pours out his choicest beverage, high and higher
> Sparkling, until it cannot choose but run
> Over the bowl, whose silver lip hath won
> An instant kiss of masterful desire,
> To stay the precious waste." *

Even Bede deplored the growing numbers crowding into the monasteries, and avowed his fears that, from the increase of monks, soldiers would be wanting to repel any invading force.

What is not so much known, however, is the fact that this Early Saxon Church became imbued with the true missionary spirit of later times. Not only was the Word of God housed, and copied, but its influence was spread abroad amongst neighbouring peoples. More than a thousand years ago England produced a succession of self-denying, heroic, and often successful missionaries, of which any country may be proud. Some of them were added to the noble army of martyrs, and many of them breathed the spirit of the glorious company of the apostles. Lappenberg says that, of all the peoples of unmixed Germanic race, the first converted to the Faith of Christ, the Anglo-Saxons, were called to impart its sanctity to the rest of Germanic and Northern Europe. Modern missionary meetings take very little notice of these early pioneers, and one might think sometimes that there had been no missions worth naming until recent times. Let us then linger a little in the company of these brave spirits, whose actions so emphatically

> "Smell sweet, and blossom from the dust."

* Wordsworth.

One of the leaders of them was *Wilfrid*, who was born in Northumbria in 634. He was a strong Romanist, and at the Synod of Whitby persuaded king and clergy that Rome was in the right with regard to the vexed question of Easter, and also as to the tonsure. As a reward, he received the see of York, which he held a long time. He was deposed and expelled several times, however, and always went protesting to Rome, and getting decrees in his favour, which, however, were little heeded at home. On one of these journeys he suffered shipwreck on the Frisian coast, and began that missionary work amongst the people which was afterwards so successfully carried on by Wilbrord.

Wilfrid erected a new basilica of polished stone at Ripon, and we are told that his patrons presented to it a beautiful copy of the four Gospels, with letters of gold on a purple parchment. It was further adorned with paintings, had a cover inlaid with gold and precious stones, and was enclosed in a golden casket.

Wilbrord was the first Bishop of the Frisians. Like Wilfrid, he belonged to the north of England, being born in Northumbria in 657. He went, with eleven companions, to Heligoland in 692. After some success there, he went on to Friesland, settled at Utrecht, and preached amongst the wild Pagans. His associates also spread Christianity amongst the Westphalians and their neighbours, he and they being powerfully supported by the victories of Pepin and Charles Martel. The Danish Frisians, on the western coast of Sleswick, also received the truth. Wilbrord, or Willibrord, was sometimes called Clement, and died in 730.

Boniface (Bonifacius Moguntinensis), also called Winfrid, has been called the Apostle of Germany. He was born at Kirton, near Exeter, between 680 and 683, of noble parents. He was educated at the monasteries of Adescancastre and Nhutschelle, and had already acquired some name for learning and piety when, in 716, he left his native country, and joined Wilbrord in Friesland.

The conversion of even Wessex, the most Pagan of

the Saxon kingdoms, had been accomplished in part, and he longed to follow others in work amongst those who were still openly Heathen. His longings led him to the old country, the Fatherland of the English, and he went with two companions amongst the Frisians. He was at first entirely unsuccessful, however. Their king, Radbod, who consented to be baptized, on hearing that the souls of his ancestors were amongst the lost, drew back, and said he would rather go to hell with his unbelieving forefathers than to heaven with a handful of beggars like them. These eager souls had to learn to add to their virtue, tact. Boniface was absolutely refused permission to preach in Radbod's dominions, and returned home to his "gray set life" for a short time, where the brethren would have elected him abbot, but he declined.

Soon plucking up his courage, he went to the Pope, who gave him authorisation and comfort. He worked for a time near to Willibrord, but refused to succeed him in his old age, and went to Hessia instead. Here he had such success that the Pope summoned him to Rome again, made him a bishop, and bound him to be faithful to Rome and her interests. He gave him also a letter of introduction to Charles Martel, which was very useful in the long missionary labours which followed.

Returning to the Hessians, he found they were practising a strange mixture of the creed of the Gospel with Pagan rites. They even offered sacrifices. Boniface determined, with his own hands, to fell one of the chief objects of superstitious reverence, the great oak tree of Glismar, sacred to the God of Thunder. Scarcely had he struck the first blows when a gust of wind shook the branches, and the aged tree fell, breaking into four pieces. The awe-stricken Pagans gave up their gods, and with the wood of the tree Boniface partly built a chapel to St. Peter. Churches soon began to rise on every side, and many of his countrymen and women came over to his assistance. He was made an archbishop, and anointed Pepin, King of the Francs, in 752.

Whilst moving about, he often asked for books, and on one occasion he asked the Abbot Eadburga to cause a copy of the Gospels to be written magnificently in letters of gold, that his German converts might be impressed with a becoming reverence for the Sacred Writings.

Positively at about the age of seventy this heroic early missionary set out on a new campaign. Consecrating Eoban to the see of Utrecht, he preached with him amongst the Heathen tribes of Frisia. Again he baptized many thousands; and wishing to hold a Confirmation of some of his new disciples, he appointed the evening of Whit Sunday, 5th June 755, for the ceremony, at a place near Dokkum, on the Bordau, between Eastern and Western Frisia. When the day arrived, however, a band of armed Pagans surrounded them. The younger of his followers prepared for resistance, but Boniface forbade it, exhorting them to submit to the death of martyrs, with the sure hope of salvation. The whole company, numbering fifty-two, and including Bishop Eoban, as well as Boniface, were massacred on the spot. The remains of Boniface were carried to the Monastery of Fulda, which he had founded. Three of the books that he then had with him are still preserved there,—the Gospels in his own handwriting, a Harmony of the New Testament, and another volume stained with his blood.

Boniface was strongly on the side of Rome, but not absurdly so, and Mosheim and others are wrong in calling him a missionary of the Papacy rather than of Christianity. He did not hesitate to speak firmly and remonstrate against the views of the Court of Rome, and once there was nearly a rupture. Besides, we must not for a moment confound the eighth century with the Middle Ages in any one particular.*

Fifteen years later, *St. Willehad*, another English mission-

* Certainly, however, he was, like many others of the time, much opposed to the marriage of the priests, and in this matter all he, and such as he, did was to convert a holy connection into one of much lower character. The author of his life tells of a celibate Bishop Gerold, who held the see of Mayence, and who had a son that succeeded him!—*The Saxons in England*, Kemble.

ary, commenced his labours at the very spot where Boniface and his companions had joined the noble army of martyrs. He was born in Northumbria about 730, educated at York under Alcuin, and went out as a missionary to Friesland in 770. Here he had success, and then went on to parts where the Gospel had never been preached before. Charlemagne heard of the impression he had made, and invited him to come and preach in the regions along the Lower Weser, where the Frisians and the Saxons met together. Here, however, his work was thwarted by the Saxon chief, and he went for a time to Rome. Returning to the field of labour, success returned also, and churches were built at Bremen and Blexen. He was made a bishop, and for centuries the dates of his consecration and death were commemorated.

St. Willibald is also connected with Boniface. He was a relation of his, and was born in England about the year 700. He went to the Holy Land, and returning to Italy, spent ten years there in a monastery. In 740 he met Boniface at Rome, and accompanied him to Germany, where he was made Bishop of Eichstadt, dying in 786.

Wunibald was his brother. They were the sons of a king or prince called Stephen, and all three journeyed together to Rome, Willibald being the only one that went on to the Holy Land. On the invitation of Boniface, he went to Germany and laboured as a missionary in Thuringia. There he was successful in establishing seven churches or monasteries, and was treated with great honour by Duke Otilo, who gave him a residence. After paying a visit to Boniface, he received from his brother Willibald the charge of the double monastery at Heidenheim, to which his sister Walburgis was also invited from Britain. He died 761, aged about sixty.

Lebuin was another of these early missionaries, and has been called the Apostle of the Frisians. He was born of Saxon parents, in England, and flamed with the same zeal which had already borne St. Willibrord and others to the adjoining parts of the Continent, having

his special mission-field in Friesland and Westphalia. He was sent by the Bishop of Utrecht to the banks of the Yssel, with a companion named Marchelm. There he lodged with a widow, and taught with some success amongst the Pagans. Afterwards, however, he met with fierce opposition, his church being burnt, and many of his people slain. His spirit rose instead of sinking under this, and he set out to meet the Saxons at a National Assembly at Markle, on the Weser, and either convert them or perish. Arrayed in his priestly garments, and with a book of the Gospels in his hand, he entered the Assembly, and proclaimed the duty of instant submission to Christ. If they refused, he announced the speedy arrival of a king who would punish and destroy them for their obstinacy, doubtless referring to Charlemagne. With some difficulty, the tumult excited against him was calmed by the help of an aged chief, named Buto, and he received permission to teach and preach everywhere. This liberty was freely used, and the rest of his life was spent in spreading the Gospel.

The brothers Hewald had scarcely entered on their labours before they were martyred. They were of English birth, and having spent some years in pious study in Ireland, went to preach to the Old Saxons of Germany, about A.D. 690. They were called the Black Hewald and White Hewald, the former being the more learned. They were equally devoted, however, and on their arrival in the country of their destination they went to a local magistrate, and obtained from him a promise to introduce them to the Alderman of the tribe. Before this was effected, however, the country people, in dread of any novelties, seized and murdered them. The Black Hewald was tortured and torn in pieces, the White Hewald despatched with the sword, and both their bodies thrown into the Rhine, on 3rd October. They had better have feared such conduct, instead of the strangers' "novelties," for the provincial ruler destroyed the village when he heard of it. Legends gathered about them. It was said that a miraculous light attended their bodies, which

were carried against the stream up the Rhine, as far as the place where the headquarters of the mission had been fixed. A spring broke forth at the place where they suffered, which, according to the Gallican Martyrology, was in Westphalia. Their arrival had been made known in a dream to Tilmon, one of their fellow-Christians, and he buried them, though their bodies were afterwards translated to Cologne. They are sometimes called the Aewalds, or the brothers Ewald.

As there were two Hewalds, so there appear to have been two *Adalberts*, but belonging to different eras. One was contemporaneous with Willibrord, and laboured amongst the Frisians. His Life was drawn up at the bidding of Egbert, Archbishop of Treves and grandson of Theodoric I., who believed himself to have been cured of a fever by this saint's intercession. In this we are told that a certain English priest, named Egbert, being Divinely forbidden to undertake a personal mission amongst the Heathen of North Germany, Willibrord and others went in his stead.* The villagers of Egmont, as late as the eighteenth century, still kept 25th June sacred to the memory of Adalbert, as their patron saint.

There may have been another Adalbert, who went to the same general district a little later. Either he or this one was of royal blood, and belonged to the north of England, being probably grandson of Oswald, King of Deira.

But the inspiration of all this early and successful missionary labour perhaps came from Ireland. Columbanus, St. Gall, and St. Kilian must engage our attention before we dismiss a subject so interesting to all in this island-corner of Europe. We gave no promise of our colonising propensities in this early time, but from both England and Ireland missionaries sped their way, urged by that Christian fervour and self-sacrifice which have marked our own age. Columbanus sallied out

* Mosheim says they were Willibrord, Suidbert, Wigbert, Acca, Willibald, Wunibald, Lebuin, the two Hewalds, Werenfrid, Marcellin, and Adalbert.

from Ireland just before Augustine came to Kent. He went, with twelve companions, to France, paying England a short visit as he passed. He was a little over forty, and had been educated at the Irish Bangor. For twenty years he laboured in the wilderness of the Vosges, founding a monastery, which was followed by others at Luxeuil, Fontaine, Besançon, etc. These were so successful that all the most prominent of the clergy of Gaul were educated there for a time. He did not accommodate himself to Rome, however, with regard to Easter and other matters in dispute, and made plenty of enemies in consequence. The Court was notorious for its profligacy also, and his faithful rebukes were resented. At last he was banished, and settled down, after some vicissitudes, on the shore of the Lake of Constance. This he was compelled to leave, however, and he then went to Italy, where he obtained the protection of the King of the Lombards, dying at Bobbio. His name is thus celebrated in France, Switzerland, and Italy, as a zealous preacher, a laborious founder of churches, and the great champion of morals at a dissolute Court. Neander has pointed out that it is his greatest distinction, however, to have first given the example of that missionary enterprise which was so largely followed in countries of the Continent of Europe. Perhaps he was fired in turn by Columba, who did not die till two years after the commencement of Columbanus's foreign toils.

St. Gall, called the Apostle of the Suevi and the Alemanni, appears to have been an Irishman of noble lineage, his mother being, it is said, Queen of Hungary. He was brought up by Columban, in St. Comgall's Monastery, at Bangor, near the Bay of Carrickfergus. When Columban went to France, St. Gall, originally called Cellach, accompanied him, and he followed him when he was driven from Luxeuil. During his master's stay at the Lake of Constance, St. Gall took a prominent part in the mission, and his ability to preach to the people in their own tongue made him the spokesman of the party. He burnt a place of idolatrous worship, and threw the offerings of

the worshippers into the lake, publicly destroying their images, which were held in much veneration. The mission was also chiefly supplied with food by his labour, for he made nets, and caught much fish. As a sample of the legends which surround such a man, we are told that one night, whilst he was fishing, he heard in the stillness the voice of the demon of the mountains crying from the heights to the demon of the lakes, and bidding him arise and help to turn out the strangers who were casting down their altars. The lake demon answered that one of them was even then troubling him, but he had no power to break his nets or do him harm, because he was for ever calling on a Divine name. When Gall heard these voices, he adjured the demons by the name of the Lord, and hastened to summon his brethren. Before they began to chant, they all of them heard the voices of demons wailing on the mountain-tops.

Certain it is that spirits more real and terrible were cast out before the victorious missionaries, and it is not too much to refer to St. Gall the evangelisation of the country between the Alps, the Aar, and the Sech. He left Columban after a time, and establishing a fresh centre for mission work, retired to a forest, and built a cell on the river Steinach. There he was soon joined by twelve others, and their little cluster of huts was the origin of the famous Monastery of St. Gall. He was once unanimously elected bishop, but persuaded the Assembly to accept one of his deacons instead. In 645 he was invited by Willibald to visit Arbon, and while there fell sick of a fever, of which he died, after fourteen days' illness.

St. Kilian was called the Apostle of Franconia. He belonged to Ireland also, and went, with a number of companions, to establish a mission in Wurzburg. Duke Gozbert received him kindly, and was converted; but St. Kilian fell a victim to the hatred of Geilana, whose marriage with Gozbert was contrary to Christian teaching. He and his companions, in the absence of the duke, were cruelly murdered A.D. 689, Geilana afterwards

becoming insane. Heavy punishments were inflicted on the descendants of Gozbert, Kilian having been made a bishop about two years before his martyrdom. His relics, with those of his companions, Coloman and Totnan, were translated in the middle of the next century.

Thus, without the power of the sword, and sometimes in spite of its teachers perishing by the sword, Christianity moved on in these early times and filled the Roman world as it is now penetrating every region of the globe. And it was the Word of the Lord that ran, had free course, and was glorified, whether it came from Rome or Iona. The differences were often ludicrously small, though they were irritating. They did not quarrel as to whether Christ suffered for our sins, was crucified, dead, and buried, and rose again the third day, but as to what time Easter was to be kept. At the same time, it was highly "inconvenient" for some to be rejoicing in Easter festivities whilst close at hand were others who were observing Holy Week. The monks also had not yet filled their heads with those intellectual errors which Rome afterwards introduced, but they became very excited as to how they should dress their hair. Still, whatever missionary or monk it might be, he was mighty to the pulling down of strongholds because he handled the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. We have constant references to its power and authority. Those that went abroad and those who stayed at home alike honoured it, used it, preached it, and defended it. Visitors who go down to Margate in the pleasant summer weather, and look at the strong old Towers of Reculver, may know that Berthwold was promoted to the Abbacy there because of his Scripture learning. He was Theodore's successor, and it was natural for Canterbury to have a "branch establishment" at the seaside near.

In 780 King Offa gave to the Church at Worcester, among other things, a Bible—Magnam Bibliam. In the same century Theodulphus made his great Bible, the Preface being written in gold. He was one of those "men of light and leading" invited by Charlemagne

to join him in spreading religion and knowledge—a second Alcuin.

Ceolfrid, first Abbot of Jarrow, doubled the library there, as well as the one at Wearmouth, not heeding Biscop's warning against dissipating the books. He gave to them each a complete Bible "of the new Translation," as Bede describes Jerome's Vulgate, Benedict having brought the older one from Rome.

When Cuthbert's tomb was opened in 1104, a copy of St. John's Gospel was found in it, a sixth-century MS. It was in Latin, and is now at Stonyhurst. Perhaps the instinct which led to this was a reverential one, but it was a pity to waste a good book in times when they were so valuable. It was in this era that Ælfred, King of Northumbria, gave Biscop a large landed estate for a single book, and the Countess of Anjou gave two hundred sheep and a large parcel of rich furs for another.

In Ireland there was the same reverence for the Word of God. "The Book of Kells," preserved in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, belongs to this period. It is a Latin copy on vellum of the four Gospels, and is one of the most beautiful manuscripts in the world. "The Book of Armagh," in the same library, is also a splendid manuscript, and includes a complete copy of the New Testament. It was written a little later by a scribe called Ferdomnach, who often asks the reader to pray for his soul in inscriptions distinctly legible to-day.

CHAPTER X

KING ALFRED

"Virtute, non vi."

"O much vexed life, for us too short, too dear!
The laggard body lame behind the soul;
Pain, that ne'er marred the mind's serene control;
Breathing on earth Heaven's æther atmosphere,
God with thee and the love that casts out fear!
A soul in life's salt ocean guarding sure
The freshness of youth's fountain, sweet and pure,
And to all natural impulse crystal clear;
To service or command, to low and high
Equal at once in magnanimity;
The great by right Divine thou only art!
Fair star that crowns the front of England's morn,
Royal with nature's royalty inborn
And English to the very heart of heart."

F. T. Palgrave.

But now we come to King Alfred, "the shepherd of his people," "the darling of the English," "the truth-teller." Very different from the "pious" King Buhred, his brother-in-law, who embraced a so-called religious life when the Danes drew near, and left his people to do the best they could, Alfred put himself at the head of what army he had, and, saving England from becoming a mere outlying part of the Northmen's dominions, devoted himself with equal zeal and success to the arts of peace. Though not always, indeed, yet very often, the revival of learning has been connected with the revival of religion, and it was so in his day, and largely by his means. In his encouragement of letters and religion, indeed, he rivals Charlemagne, and is one of the first

KING ALFRED.

of English writers and translators. Mr. Sharon Turner exclaims that, considering how recently literature of any sort had been introduced, no country has ever produced an intellect amongst its sovereigns that combined so many excellencies; and Mr. Green bids us look at the mighty roll of books that fill our libraries, and realise that all began with his translations and chronicles. We must divide the honour, however, with those we have already spoken of; but certain it is that, amongst his labours, Alfred translated portions of the Word of God, and so let us linger lovingly on his history.

He had a great deal against his ever becoming one of the Fathers of English literature. Both his parents were dead before he was ten; he was on the throne at twenty-one; he was immersed for long in deadly warfares; he was a great sufferer much of his life; and he died at fifty-two. But when his father married the granddaughter of Charlemagne, she came from Paris to England, and brought a smattering of learning with her, and some love for it. She was sitting one day surrounded by the family of her adoption, with a beautiful volume of Saxon poetry in her hands. It might have been Cædmon; it might have been Aldhelm. She proposed to give it to whoever soonest learnt to read it. Of Alfred's elder brothers, one was a king, and the others in mature youth or manhood. Alfred was only twelve, and, pleased with the illumination of the initial letter, he inquired if she really meant it. She repeated the promise with a smile of pleasure, and he won it, this French princess becoming thus the kind Minerva from whom arose the first shoots of that intellectual character which we admire in Alfred.*

* Sharon Turner. Mr. Palgrave has written another sonnet on this famous incident, which the reader will thank us for reproducing:—

"The fair-haired boy is at his mother's knee,
A many-coloured page before them spread,
Gay summer harvest field of gold and red,
With lines and staves of ancient minstrelsy,
But through her eyes alone the child can see,
From her sweet lips partake the words of song,
And looks as one who feels a hidden wrong,
Or gazes on some feat of witchery.

Later on, however, when he found that the great works were written in Latin, he could find no one to teach it him in all Wessex. And no wonder, when from about A.D. 860 the Danes came and destroyed all before them, treating the Saxons very much as they (the Saxons) had treated the Britons three hundred years before. "Tam aris quam aratris"—Lindisfarne, Coldingham, Tynemouth, Bardney, Croyland, Peterbro', and Ely were visited with equal fury. There was a good library at Peterbro', where the fire was blazing for a fortnight. Back went the hand on the dial, and if it had not been for Alfred, probably the victory would have been as complete as the Saxons themselves had enjoyed.

So Alfred had to do the best he could, and that seemed to be to summon capable teachers to his side. Men of learning and religion came at his call, adorned his Court, and taught him and his people. Asser, who was one of them, and wrote his Life, puts it quaintly when he says: "He would avail himself of every opportunity of procuring coadjutors in his good designs; and like a prudent bird which, rising in summer with the early morning from her beloved nest, steers her rapid flight through the uncertain tracks of ether, and descends on the manifold and varied flowers, of grasses, herbs and shrubs, essaying that which pleases most, that she may bear it to her home; so did he direct his eyes afar, and seek without that which he had not within in his own kingdom."

Grimbold came from St. Omer, in France, to preside over the new abbey at Winchester. Alfred took the trouble to send an embassy, begging him to come, and there is a legend that he entertained Alfred during one of his long journeys to Rome, and made a deep impression on the little fellow. Asser came from the western ex-

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'When thou canst use it, thine the book,' she cried.
'Unkingly task!' his comrades cry in vain!
All work ennobles nobleness, all art,
He thinks; head governs hand; and in his heart
All knowledge for his province he has ta'en."

STATUE OF KING ALFRED AT WINCHESTER.

tremities of Wales, and it was agreed that he should spend six months with Alfred and six in his own country. He was a Celt, and became Bishop of Sherborne. Erigena, or John the Irishman, is said to have come from the abbey at Corbey to rule a school and monastery at Athelney, a memorial of Alfred's gratitude. Other names are mentioned—Werfrith, Bishop of Worcester, "a man skilled in the Scriptures," Plegmund, who became Archbishop of Canterbury, Athelstan, and Werwulf. He rewarded all liberally, Asser receiving two monasteries and all they contained—Amesbury in Wilts, and Banwell in Somerset.

Many of them remained with him, for the Court of King Alfred was no mere state palace, nor even a royal home. It was a travelling University, a British Association, the Court of Justice, the Board of Trade, the Admiralty, and the Horse Guards of the kingdom. Alfred's celebrated candles, by which he divided his time, had to have lanterns of wood and fine horn to protect them from the draughts that came from the doors and "crevices in the walls." The learned men, pupils or pupils of pupils of great Englishmen many of them, shared this uncomfortable nomadic life.*

Alfred insisted on the earls and thegns learning to read and write, and Asser expresses the lamentation of these well-born but untaught men that they had not studied these things in their youth. They clearly wanted the degree of education which our poorest charity-children receive now. King Alfred says in his Preface to Gregory's *Pastoral*: "I thought how I saw, before it was all spoiled and burned, how the churches were filled with treasures of books, and also with a great multitude of God's servants; yet they reaped very little fruit of these books, because they could understand nothing of them, as they were not written in their own native tongue. Few persons south of the Humber could understand the service in English, or translate Latin into English."

* *Sketches of Christian Life*, Boyes.

It was not till he was forty, however, that he began his Latin, calling to recollection what benefit had been derived by all nations by the translation of the Scriptures and other suitable works, and he writes to Wulfsig, then Bishop of London: "I think it better if you think so, that we also translate some books, the most necessary for all men to know; and we may do this very easily if we have peace."

Asser tells us that his first attempts at translation were made upon the Bible, and the immediate occasion of his commencing the work was as follows:—Asser and the king were engaged in pleasant conversation, and it so chanced that Asser quoted a passage in a collection of Psalms and Hymns which he had with him at Athelney, and which he always carried in his bosom; but not a blank leaf could be found in the book. The king called for a clean skin of parchment, and this being folded into fours, in the shape of a book, the passage from the Scriptures was written upon it in Latin, together with some other good texts; and the king, setting to work upon these passages, translated them into the Anglo-Saxon tongue. He also prefixed to his laws a translation of the Ten Commandments and such other portions of the Mosaic injunctions in the three following chapters in Exodus as were most to his purpose, though some of them seem very inapplicable. In the MS. History of Ely it is said that he translated a large portion of the Scriptures, but a little soon becomes exaggerated to much when a king is the penman. Perhaps, however, as his literary labours began with such work, so they ended with it. The Danes, though beaten badly at Edington and elsewhere, were far from crushed. They were fond of burning all the books they could find, though one might have thought that the pretty illuminated letters would have pleased the eyes of savages. On the news of some fresh inroad, with the usual result, Alfred is said to have exclaimed: "Then let us have God's Book translated into the people's own tongue, so that if these Pagans land in greater numbers, and burn all our books, the people may have the Bible by heart." And

he set about the Psalter, though he did not live to complete it.*

For years he carried in his bosom his little book in which the daily order of the Psalms was contained, so that he might read them at leisure.

Here is an illustration of King Alfred's "Dooms," as given by Mr. Thorpe:—

2. Utter thou not my name idly, for thou shalt not be guiltless towards me, if thou utter my name idly.

3. Remember that thou hallow the rest day. Work for yourselves six days and on the seventh rest. For in six days Christ wrought the Heavens and the Earth, the Seas and all creatures that are in them, and rested on the seventh day; and therefore the Lord hallowed it.

Alfred's famous saying, "I would that every Englishman should be as free as the air we breathe," ranks fitly by the side of these efforts to make the Bible free to all. His object was to do his people good. There was that practical and moral aim even in his literary work which is characteristic of much of our earliest literature as well as our latest. He wanted the people generally to have some education. Much had been done on the Continent by Charlemagne, but his munificence was calculated to confine the gift within the pale of the cloister. Alfred sought to diffuse knowledge rather than to centre it in a caste. His own example had immense influence, and he stimulated his subjects both by rewards and punishments, allowing no one that was ignorant to aspire to any dignity in the court. At least every free-born youth was to abide at his book till he could well understand English writing, and he himself kept the general superintendence of the school he established for the young nobles of his court.

Mr. Green has evidently read all his other translations, and tells us that they are not translations merely. He took the manuals popular in his age, and such as he thought

* Malmesbury is an authority for this. Flor. Wig. says that it was on the feast of St. Martin in 887 that he began it. This looks precise. Boston of Bury says that it was "almost all the Testament" that he translated.—SPELMAN'S *Life*.

would do good, enlivening his moral lessons by apologues or fables. Boethius flourished at the close of the fifth century, and was master of the offices to Theodoric, King of the Goths. He wrote a book whose object was to diminish the influence of riches, dignity, power, pleasure, or glory, and to prove their inadequacy to produce happiness. The Author of existence is set forth as the sovereign good, and it is this part which our great moralist and critic has thus rendered:—

> "O Thou, whose power o'er moving worlds presides,
> Whose voice created, and whose wisdom guides,
> On darkling man in pure effulgence shine
> And cheer the clouded mind with light Divine.
> 'Tis Thine alone to calm the pious breast
> With silent confidence and holy rest;
> From Thee, Great God, we spring; to Thee we tend—
> Path, motive, guide, original, and end." *

Alfred was a great sufferer for a large part of his life, but in his very free translation of Boethius he bursts out into an enthusiastic acknowledgment of the goodness of God. Boethius was worthy of his skill, and has been called the last of the ancients. He fell a victim to Theodoric, and his *Consolation of Philosophy*, which Alfred translated, was written in prison, like the words of the "immortal Dreamer." Mingling an almost Christian sanctity with the lessons of the classic writers, he speaks from his prison, as Hallam says, in the swan-like tones of dying eloquence. In Alfred's hands the Pagan book became Christian, and the learned book popular.

Another popular manual translated by Alfred was *Orosius*. This was then the one accessible handbook of Universal History, and he enriched it by an outline of the state of Germany, up to date. The Venerable Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* he also turned into Saxon, freely interpolating ideas of his own, such as that on the theory of good government, as consisting in a due balance of the priest, the soldier, and the churl.

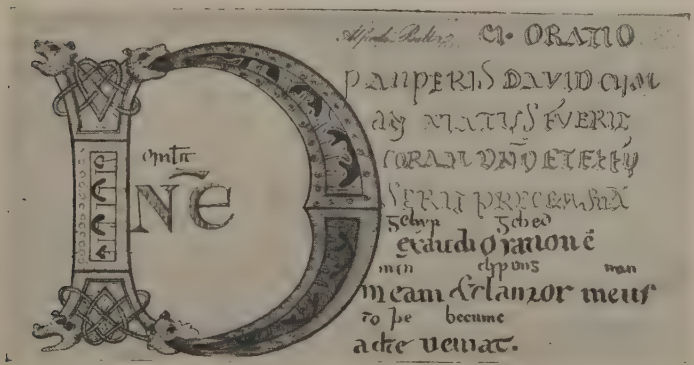
Pope Gregory's book on the *Pastoral Office* we have

* Sharon Turner.

already referred to. It was much prized throughout Europe, is twice praised by Alcuin, and was the best handbook of the time for the guidance of the clergy. He translated this, and collected also some of the flowers of Augustine, adding prayers to his soliloquies.*

Here is a prayer of this father of literature and religion :—

"Come now to help me, O Thou who art the only Eternal, the true God of glory; Father and Son and Holy Spirit, without any separation and mutability, and without any necessity or diminution of power, and who never diest.



ALFRED'S PSALTER.

Thou art always dwelling in the highest brightness in perfect unanimity, and in the fullest abundance. With Thee there is no deficiency of good, but Thou art ever abiding replete with every felicity, through endless time. To Thee, O God, I call. Hear, O hear me, Lord, for Thou art my God and my Lord; my Father and my Creator; my ruler and my hope; my wealth and my honour; my house; my country; my salvation and my life. Hear, hear me, O Lord. Few of Thy servants comprehend Thee. But Thee alone I love indeed, above all other

* In his Anglo-Saxon Chronicle also we have a continuous National Record from our first coming here.

things; Thee I seek; Thee I will follow; Thee I am ready to serve. Under Thy power I desire to abide, for Thou alone art the Sovereign of all. I pray Thee to command me as Thou wilt."

Alfred's spirit was fervent. Hearing that there were some colonies of Christian Syrians settled on the coasts of Malabar and Coromandel, who were supposed to speak the same tongue as Christ spoke when on earth, he sent Swithelm, then Bishop of Sherborne, and an embassy, by the "Overland Route," to interview them. It was almost as great an undertaking in such times as the North-West Passage in these; but instead of leaving their bones there, they brought back something for their pains—presents of gems and Indian spices.

The above prayer is put into language of to-day, though the thought is Alfred's, and as a contrast take this extract from *Orosius* in Alfred's own tongue:—

"Nu wille we ymb Europa land-gemœre reccan, swa mycel swa wæ hit fyrmest witon, fram þœre éa Danais West oð Rhin ða ea, seo wylð of þœm beorge þe man Alpis hœt, and yrnð þonne norðryhte on þœs garsecges earm, þe þœt land utan-ymb lið þe man Bryttania hœt, and eft suð oþ Donua þa ea, þœre œwylme is neah þœre ea Rines, and is siððan east yrnende wið Crecaland ut on þone Wendelsœ, and Norð oþ þone garsecg þe man Cwensœ hœt, binnan þœm syndon manega ðeoda; ac hit man hœt eall Germania." *

Let not St. Neot be forgotten when we think of King Alfred's many-sided virtue. It was largely owing to his wisdom and faithfulness. He was a prince and a relative, becoming a monk of Glastonbury, visiting Rome seven times, and possibly suggesting the foundation of Oxford University, and becoming one of the first teachers there.† He tried to copy the predominant virtue of everyone in his cloister, and in Alfred's earlier life taught

* *Biog. Brit. Lit.*, Wright.

† Mr. Church thinks this is a fancy, but gives no reasons, and a few years ago University College celebrated its thousandth anniversary on the strength of the story. (*Early Britain*, A. J. Church, M.A.) Stephen calls this a "deliberate and interested falsehood."

him to profit by the adversities which happened to him. That he did this is seen in his dying counsels to his son :—

"I pray thee, for thou art my dear child, strive to be a father and a lord to the people. Be thou the children's father and the widow's friend. Comfort thou the poor and shelter the weak ; and with all thy might right that which is wrong. And, son, govern thyself by law, then shall the Lord love thee, and God above all things shall be thy reward. Call thou upon Him to advise thee in all thy need, and so shall He help thee the better to compass that which thou wouldest."

Alfred's work seemed to fail in the near future. His example and his princely rewards had but a temporary effect, and in the time of Odo ignorance again brooded over the land. But though the Danes harried and burnt for a time, Woden soon yielded to Christ. The fierce Northmen were, after all, the same blood as the Saxons, and they settled down amongst them, instead of driving them out of the land, as the Saxons had driven out the Britons. Their stupid superstitions died the death, and the whole nation once more presented the appearance of a Christian people.

Here is the Lord's Prayer of King Alfred's time :—

"Uren Fader dhic art in Heofnas,
Our Father which art in Heaven,

Sic gehalged dhin noma,
Hallowed be Thy Name.

To cymedh dhin ric,
Come Thy Kingdom,

Sic dhin uuilla sue is in Heofnas and in eardho,
Be thy will so as in Heaven and in earth,

Vren hlaf ofer uuirthe sel vs to daeg,
Our loaf supersubstantial give us to-day,

And forgef us scylda urna,
And forgive us our debts,

Sue uue forgefan sculdgun vrum,
So as we forgive our debts,

And no inleadh vridk in costnung al gefrig
And not inlead us into temptation but deliver

vrich from ifle.
every one from evil."

The almost inevitable exaggerations attached to great names are found in connection with Alfred's. The principle of trial by jury is as old as the Teutonic race itself, and the first lines of its actual existing shape are not discoverable till ages after his days. His division of the land into shires, hundreds, and tithings is probably a legend, and he was never King of England, but only of the West Saxons.

But as one of the founders of our noble literature, and a true king and father of his people, we have done well lately to keep up his millenary with all honours.

CHAPTER XI

LINDISFARNE GOSPELS, OR THE DURHAM BOOK

"For with the ebb and flow its style
Varies from Continent to Isle;
Dry shod o'er sands twice every day
The pilgrims to the shrine find way;
Twice every day the waves efface,
Of staves and sandalled feet the trace."

"In Saxon strength that Abbey frowned
With massive arches broad and round,
That rose alternate, row and row,
On ponderous columns, short and low."

When the libraries of the monasteries were sacked, whole shipfuls of books were sent to foreigners, to their wonder. Some were sold to grocers and soapsellers. Two entire libraries were sold for 40s., the Universities being by no means clear in the matter.*

Some valuable manuscripts have escaped, however, and now we come to one of the finest, carefully preserved in the British Museum. It is indeed one of the books of the world, and is absolutely priceless. Sometimes it is called the Lindisfarne Gospels, which is preferable, and sometimes the Durham Book. It is a large folio manuscript of the four Gospels in both Latin and Saxon, splendidly bound, illuminated, and enriched. The original Latin is traced back to Eadfrith,† Bishop of Lindisfarne, or the Holy Isle, A.D. 698–721. His successor, Æthelwold, with the assistance of an anchorite, called Bilfrith, adorned it with golden bosses and precious stones, and decorated

* *Lives of Leland, etc.* Oxford, 1782.

† We give the four names as spelt in the book itself.

it with illuminations of an intricate and beautiful character. Then last, and not till two or three centuries afterwards, the Saxon version was written between the lines by Aldred. Mr Ingram, Professor of Saxon at Oxford in his day, says that the language is Dano-Saxon, and that it was probably written by the same Aldred (Ealdred) who was promoted to the see of York in A.D. 1060. Humphrey Wanley assigns it to the time of King Alfred; and Mr. Skeat, our great living authority at Cambridge, fixes the probable date at about A.D. 950, and thinks that it was executed at the time when it was kept at Chester-le-Street, near Durham, whither it had been removed for fear of the Danes.

There are 258 leaves of vellum, 13½′ by 9½′, and in addition to the Gospels there are St. Jerome's Epistle of Pope Damasus, the Eusebian Canons, two Prefaces, short notices of the four Evangelists, arguments of the sections into which the Gospels are divided (not, of course, our modern chapters), and Tables of Lessons to be read on Sundays and Festivals.

There is a curious story attached to it, told by Simeon of Durham. Its original depository was the Episcopal Church at Lindisfarne, and when this was ruined by the predatory Danes, the monks in their passage to the coast of Northumberland let it fall into the sea. It came to shore, however, and having been three days in the water, its preservation was attributed to St. Cuthbert, and it was supposed to be endowed with miraculous powers, plenty of wonders being hereafter told about it.

The pictures of the Evangelists, prefixed to their respective Gospels, remain; with four tablets containing a fanciful design of the Cross, richly painted.

Dr. Waagan says of it: "The carefully glazed strong parchment, beautiful capital letters throughout, the very rich ornaments with which whole pages are decorated, prove that all the art of the age was spent upon it. The four Evangelists are taken from Byzantine models, but executed with only mechanical skill, shadows and middle tints being wanting, and the faces quite inanimate. The

ST. MATTHEW.

NINTH CENTURY GOSPEL-BOOK OF MAC DURNAN,
LAMBETH PALACE LIBRARY.

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delicacy of the calligraphic work, on the other hand, is very great, and all the colours are as brilliant as if laid on yesterday." *

Dr. Waagan thinks the execution was probably done by English monks, from Irish models. St. John's Gospel is written in red ink, in a different hand, and there is this key to the fact at the end: "Eadfrith, Bishop of the Lindisfarne Church, he at the first wrote this book in honour of God and St. Cuthbert and all the saints in common that are in the Island, and Edilwold, Bishop of the people of the Lindisfarne Island, made it firm on the outside and covered it as well as he could. And Bilfrith, the anchorite, he wrought in smith's work the ornaments that are on the outside, and adorned it with gold and also with gems, overlaid with silver, unalloyed metal. And Aldred, an unworthy and most miserable priest, with the help of God and St. Cuthbert, glossed it above in English, and made himself at home with the three parts: Matthew's part for the honour of God and St. Cuthbert; Mark's part for the Bishop; and Luke's part for the brotherhood, together with 8 oras of silver (deposited) with God and St. Cuthbert; John's part for himself, to the end that he may gain admittance into Heaven through God's mercy, and on earth happiness and peace, promotion and dignity, wisdom and prudence, through St. Cuthbert's merits." Perhaps "for himself" may mean that he did St. John's Gospel in his own handwriting, but in any case it is pleasant to find that our unworthy and most miserable friend, according to his own showing, could make himself so much at home with the Evangelists, and have so good a prospect for this world and the next.

In a marginal note he calls himself the eminent son of a good woman, and after being provost in the middle of the tenth century, he may have been Bishop of Durham from 946–968. The precious stones in the binding are genuine, but the binding is modern, being a restoration executed about 1838.

* *Treasures of Art in Great Britain.*

The Palæographical Society have published this splendid book, and in a splendid form, the whole-page portraits and illuminations being reproduced. In the Preface they say that on their own merits the English and Irish schools of calligraphy are entitled to special attention, for their productions are much finer than Continental works in the period before Charlemagne. As for this volume, on account of its beauty of writing and richness of ornament, its great antiquity, its excellent condition, and the fortunate circumstance that the time and place of its production are recorded, it becomes a type by which to judge MSS. of a similar character. Mr. F. Astle, F.R.S., in his *Origin of Writing*, goes more at length into its calligraphy, saying that the Romans taught us how to write, and that five kinds of writing prevailed in England from the coming of Augustine (A.D. 596) to the Norman Conquest—Roman-Saxon, Set-Saxon, Running-hand Saxon, Mixed Saxon, and Elegant Saxon.

To the first belongs "this most noble monument of Anglo-Saxon calligraphy," as Mr. Astle calls it. The Roman-Saxon writing was very similar to the Roman uncial. Towards the middle of the eighth century Set-Saxon came in, and was not entirely disused till the beginning of the tenth century. About the end of the ninth century, when learning was diffused under the auspices of King Alfred, the characters became loose and free, and abbreviations were numerous. Lastly, after the Mixed came the Elegant Saxon writing, which became common in England early in the tenth century, lasted till the Norman Conquest, and was not entirely disused till the middle of the twelfth. Mr. Astle says this is more beautiful than the writing in France, Italy, and Germany during the same period.

Here is Mark, chapter i.:—

"Godspelles fruma Hoelendes Crist Godes suna, suoe awritten is in Esaia done witgo Heonu ic asendi min engel befora onsione den sede foregearwas wegden."

The Latin letters are very large, and the Saxon small, as if they scarcely dare find themselves in such company.

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST.

FROM THE LINDISFARNE GOSPEL-BOOK. A.D. 720.

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We see what were the traditional ideas of the Evangelists when we turn over such a book. St. Matthew has an angel above him with a trumpet in his mouth, and a man watching him as he writes. Then comes Mark, with a lion above him; he also is writing, and wears a purple robe striped with blue. Luke has a winged animal above him, which could only be called an ox by courtesy. He has a dress similar to Mark's, which opens and shows a lilac undervest, with light green stripes. St. John has his hand to his heart, and an eagle for his companion. Our ancestors were evidently fond of rich and bright effects, whether the Evangelists had such coats of many colours or not. The same taste rules in the other ornamentation of the book. At the beginning of St. Luke's Gospel the birds have white wings and heads, yellow legs and crests, and green or blue necks. The cat's head terminating the side border is yellow, the muzzle white, and the legs blue! Many of the ornaments are singularly tesselated or dovetailed in a sort of mosaic work, within arabesque compartments.

Yes, it was all done in honour of St. Cuthbert, and well it might be. And if it had been done in honour of St. Aidan, another Lindisfarne celebrity, he would have richly deserved it too. The first church between the Tees and the Firth of Forth was built here by him, and he built it of split oak, and thatched it with the wiry bent grass which grows in such abundance on the island. Oswald, the king, whose royal residence was at Bambrough, had seen the civilising effects of Christianity while an exile from his throne at the court of the Scottish king, and when recalled to his country, was almost immediately compelled to defend his people against Cedwell, a neighbouring king. Oswald, like Constantine, fought under the banner of the Cross, and vowed that, if victorious, he would adopt and support it throughout his dominions. He proved the victor, and applied to Scotland for a missionary to come and teach his people. From Iona came Coran first of all, but he soon returned, saying the people were too stupid. Then Aidan took up the work,

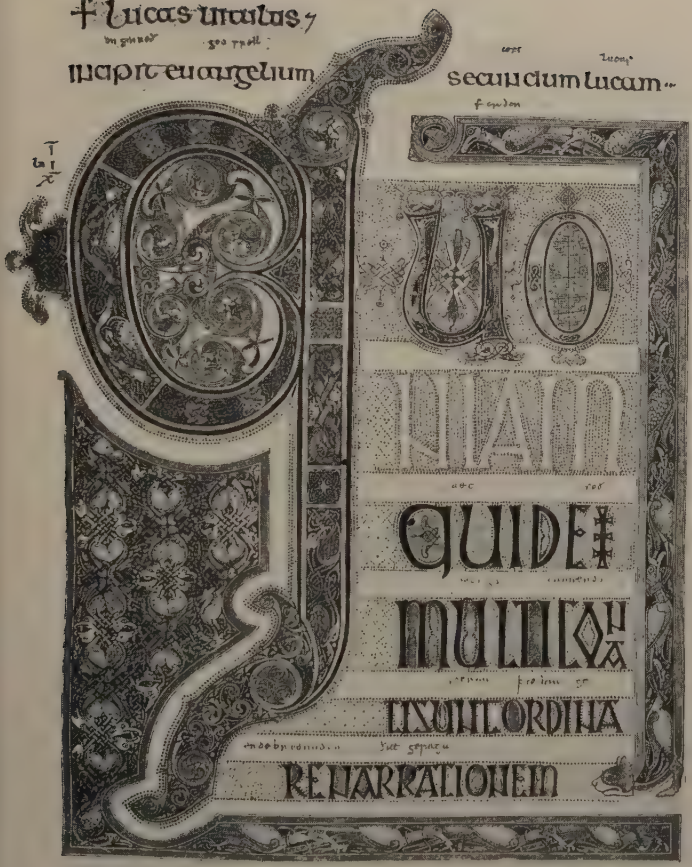
and succeeded just where the other failed, often being accompanied by the king in his missionary journeys.

Cuthbert, who came a little later, is the popular saint of Lindisfarne, whether his claims be greater than Aidan's or not. He was the sixth bishop, and became a hermit twice, dying at the little island of Farne, close at hand. Already during life he had been reverenced as a saint, and for centuries his fame went on increasing. All sorts of miracles were ascribed to him, and they did not end with his death. For instance, certain fishermen having lost their gear and tackle, and being overtaken in a sudden squall, invoked the aid of St. Cuthbert, who duly came, sat in the seat of the steersman, and with his pastoral staff guided their frail barque into safety—

> "They saw an old man who sat on the 'wale,
> His beard was long and silver grey,
> Like the rime that falls at break of day,
> His locks like wool and his color wan.
> The helmsman turned his brow to the sky,
> Upraised his cowl, and upraised his eye,
> And away shot the barque on the wings of the wind
> O'er billow and bay, like an image of mind."

Before he died, he gave permission that his corpse might be brought to Lindisfarne, on condition that the monks never deserted it. In 868 came the great incursion of the Danes, before which the Bishop (Eardulph) and monks fled over the Kyloe Hills with the body of St. Cuthbert, relics of St. Aidan, and other valuables. When they looked behind them, they saw their wooden church in flames, and they dropped their splendid Book of the Gospels into the sea. Two hundred and forty-one years had gone since Aidan came, and once more Lindisfarne was given up to "the sad sea waves." During more than a century of troublous times they stayed at Chester-le-Street, where perhaps the Saxon version was written between the lines in the Gospels, recovered from the sea. Then on to Durham, where Cuthbert now rests.

The history of famous Lindisfarne, however, does not end here. It was called "Holy Isle" soon after the Conquest, and in 1083 a cell of Benedictine monks came



BEGINNING OF S. LUKE'S GOSPEL.

LINDISFARNE GOSPEL-BOOK. MS. COTT. NERO D. IV.

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and took possession of the ruins. In 1093 they began the beautifully proportioned stone monastery, amid the ruins of which the tourist now wanders. The work was not slow, as in those days "labour was praise, and labour was prayer; so thought the masons as they fashioned the stones, and the labourers as they shouldered them, and carried them to their appointed places." So all was finished some time between 1110 and 1120. In 1536 the smaller monasteries were dissolved, and this one amongst them, being used for secular purposes until 1613. The spirit of St. Cuthbert still seemed to hover around, however, for when a new claimant appeared, his spoliations were promptly judged. This was the Earl of Dunbar, Lord Warden of the Marches. By an act of usurpation, he came and stripped off the lead from the roof, and carried away the bells and everything valuable upon which he could lay hands. The ship, however, with many persons therein, was sunk soon after leaving the land, and all were drowned except one or two. The castle was built a few years after the monastery was dissolved.

This beautiful "Gospel Book" remained at Lindisfarne from 1093 till the time of Henry VIII., when it came into the hands of Sir R. Cotton. It was printed by K. W. Bouterwek in 1857, who turns a gloss into a translation. It was also edited for the Surtees Society by Stevenson and Waring, and the student should not fail to turn over the facsimiles of miniatures and ornaments of Anglo-Saxon and Irish manuscripts published by Westwood.*

Let us close with the Lord's Prayer, as given in this famous and beautiful old manuscript:—

"Fader uren thu in Heofnas,
Sie gehalgud Nama thin,
To Cymeth ric thin;
Sie fillo thin suae is in Heofne and in Eortha.
Hlaf userne oferwirtlic sel us to daeg;
And forgef us scyltha urna suae we forgefon scylgum urum.
And ne inlead writh in Cosnunge.
Al gefrigurich from evil."

* The Gospel of St. Matthew in this version and in Gothic from the Codex Argenteus were also published in 1807 by Rev. Samuel Henshall.

CHAPTER XII

THE RUSHWORTH GLOSS, AND OTHER ANGLO-SAXON GOSPELS

"The dim-discovered world where lived our fathers."

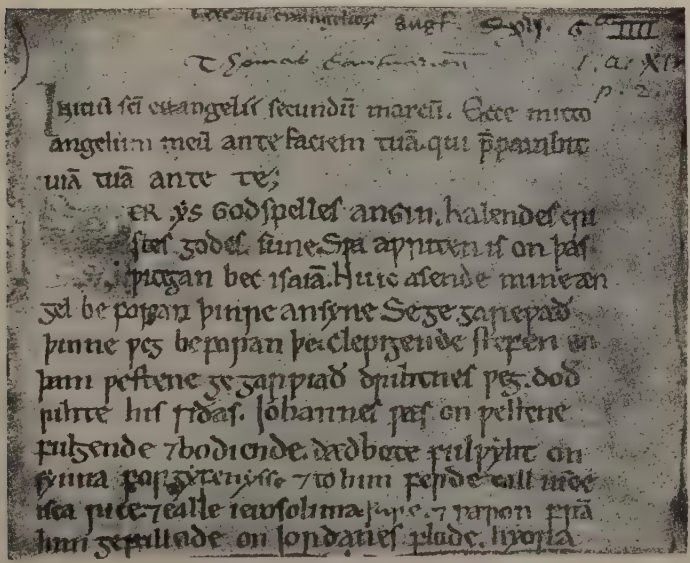
A SOMEWHAT similar translation of the Gospels to the Durham Book, belonging to about the same period, was executed by Owun and Farmen, of Harewood, in Yorkshire, nothing more being known about them than that Farmen was a priest. This is commonly called the "Rushworth Gloss," because it was for a long time the property of John Rushworth, Esq., of Lincoln's Inn, as the Mazarin Bible has been called after the Cardinal of that name, in whose library it was found, instead of after Gutenberg, whose printing of it was a real achievement.

The MS. consists of 169 leaves of thick vellum, 14′ by 10½′. The transcriber of the MS., by name Macregol, takes the credit of his work in a little Latin sentence, from which we learn two things: first, that such vernacular translations were under no sort of ban; and second, that the transcriber considered that in multiplying copies he was doing a deed which might fairly claim the prayers of those that handled them.

Wanley supposes it to have belonged to Bede, whilst the Irish Annals of A.D. 820 record the death of a scribe named Mackiagoil, an abbot at Birr, in Queen's County.

Harewood is on the Wharfe, a few miles from Leeds, and thus the gloss is Northern English, or Yorkshire. Mr. Skeat says it belongs to the latter half of the tenth

century, and that it was derived directly from the Lindisfarne Gospels. At least, there is a distinction and a difference, St. Matthew being in Old Mercian, a dialect of great rarity, whilst the other three are in the Northern dialect. It is an independent translation, however, Farmen and Owun frequently exercising their own judgment. It is perhaps correct to say that, whereas the gloss in the



ENGLISH GOSPELS OF THE TENTH CENTURY.
REDUCED FACSIMILE OF A PORTION OF A PAGE.

Lindisfarne Gospels depends upon the Latin text of that MS. only, the gloss in the Rushworth MS. depends upon the Latin texts in both. Farmen the presbyter was a Midland man, and Owun belonged to the North. Farmen probably began a translation of St. Matthew, and then got the use of the Lindisfarne Gospels, slavishly following them till he got tired, when he turned it over to Owun.

Thus the marginal notes of the one are reproduced in the other. This is the inscription :—

"Let him that makes use of me pray for Owun, who glossed this book, for Foerman the priest at Harewood.

"Have now a written book ;
Use it with good will
Ever with true faith ;
Peace is dearest to every man."

The MS. is now in the Bodleian Library at Oxford (3946), and Dr. Waagan says of it that the pictures, of which there are many, are of secondary merit, and belong probably to the eighth century, showing a decided imitation of Irish art. The colours are in golden yellow, vermilion, black, and the transparent crimson peculiar to English and Irish monasteries. The drawings, however, are very poor, but the opening words of each Gospel form an elaborate page of ornamental work in the usual style of Irish art. Mark, Luke, and John have also portraits, the colours being red, yellow, purple, and green.

Mr. Rushworth, whose name is attached to this early Book of the Gospels, was Deputy-Clerk to the House of Commons during the Long Parliament.

When the text of this version differs from the Textus Receptus, it agrees with that of the Codex Bezæ. The Surtees Society has published the Rushworth Gloss, under the editorship of the Rev. Jos. Stevenson, M.A., and G. Waring, M.A.

The following are the other principal Anglo-Saxon Gospels, as far as known :—

1. The MS. in Corpus Christi Library, Cambridge (140), said to be copied from an older one before the Conquest. Perhaps 990–1030 ; Mr. Skeat says before A.D. 1000. Several manuscripts mention an Abbot of Bath, who died 1087. At the end of St. Matthew we read : "I Elfric wrote this book in the monastery of Bath, and gave it to Britwold the Prior."

Perhaps this was the Britwold who was Bishop of Sherborne 1006–46.

2. The small folio in the University Library at Cambridge (Ii. 2.11). This is written in West Saxon, has the rubrics complete, and was probably written about the time of the Norman Conquest. There are 402 pages of vellum, and some other books are bound up with the Gospels. It once belonged to Bishop Leofric, and was given by him to St. Peter's, Exeter. In 1566 it was given to Archbishop Parker, who presented it to the great Cambridge Library in 1574, his bold, clear handwriting being on the first page—"Matthæus Cantuor, 1574."

Leofric was Bishop of Devonshire and Cornwall 1046–73.

The Gospels are divided into paragraphs, denoted by large plain capital letters of different colours, the green and light blue being as bright as if just done. This is the only copy preserved with the rubrics complete.

Here is the commencement of St. Matthew: "After Matheus gerecednesse her is encorisse boc Hoelend's Cristes Davides suna, Abrahame's suna."

It is imperfect at the end, and the last words are: "Gif pa ealle awrytene woeron ic were ne myhte pes myddaneard ealle pa bee befon. Amen."

Mr. Thorpe collated this MS. for his edition of the Anglo-Saxon Gospels, published in 1842.

The volume contains the pseudo-Gospel of Nicodemus, Gesta Salvatoris nostri, and another work.

3. The Cotton MS. (Otho C. 1).

This is a once fine MS. written on vellum before the Norman Conquest, and is in the British Museum Library. Wanley described it in 1704, as he did all the Anglo-Saxon MSS., in one mighty and almost inaccessible volume. As most of the collection made by Archbishop Parker and his scribe Jocelin went to Corpus Christi, Cambridge, so Sir R. Cotton's went to the great Museum Library, and this portion is commonly called the Cotton Library. On October 23, 1731, a fire broke out, and destroyed wholly or partially a large number of volumes, and this one amongst them. Through the skill of Sir Frederick Madden, however, the mischief was largely repaired. He carefully

mounted it, sheet by sheet, on thick folio paper, cut away in the middle to fit the injured vellum, and made fast by transparent paper.

Planta said the binding was impossible, but it is done, and the MS. is legible once more. There are no rubrical directions, and only a few badly formed capital letters of a dingy red colour. The accents are neither numerous nor carefully applied. Between St. Luke and St. John is a charter relating to Aldhelm. The MS. is of about the same age as the Corpus Christi MS., but the first folio now is number 26.

4. Hatton MS. This is in the Bodleian Library (38), and probably belongs to the time of Henry II., being thus Anglo-Saxon in its latest form. It is uniformly and beautifully written, but the accents are few and capriciously applied. It is a large vellum octavo, and the Gospels are arranged in this order: Mark, Luke, Matthew, John. It belonged to the Rev. John Parker, son of the Archbishop, who neatly wrote and inserted a missing leaf, Luke 16. There is only one rubric in Anglo-Saxon, at the beginning of John: "Her onginth dhoet god spell dhe Johannes se Godspellere gewrat on Pathmos dham eiglande."

5. Royal MS., in British Museum.

(I. A. 14.) This is very similar to the Hatton MS., but somewhat smaller. The writing is a little earlier, and less regular. The rubrics are few, and of a brighter red than the Hatton, the words of the one to St. John being exactly the same. In fact, it was probably copied from the Hatton MS. by someone with plenty of leisure. It is octavo, was formerly in St. Augustine's Monastery, at Canterbury, and afterwards came into the possession of Archbishop Cranmer. Probably it belongs to Stephen's time.

The order of the Gospels seems to have been a matter of taste. This is the order here: Mark, Matthew, Luke, John. St. Mark begins: "Her ys Godspelles angin, Halendes Cristes Godes sune, swa awriten is on thas

witegan bec Isaiah." St. Matthew begins: "Sodhlice wel is to understanden that after Matheus gerecednysse her his oncneornysse hoc Hoelendes Cristes Davides suna." St. Luke begins: "Nu we willadh her eow areccen Lucos boc dhaes halgen Godspellers.

"Fordham dhe wytodlice manega thohte thare thinge wace ge endebyrden dhe on us gefylde sint, swa us betahten tha the hit of frimdhe gesawon and dhare sproece the nas woeron." *

6. The Oxford MS., in the Bodleian Library (441). This is a small folio written before the Norman Conquest, in fine, bold, Anglo-Saxon characters. The rubrics have been added somewhat later, and some of the vowels are accented. It is closely allied with the best MSS., though some of the leaves are on new parchment and of later date.

This was the basis of the version, from an Ante-Hieronymian Latin text, which, at the suggestion of Archbishop Parker, was printed under the care of John Foxe, the martyrologist. It was more than at the suggestion of the great Protestant Archbishop, for he bore the expense, and it was fitting that this copy of the Gospels should be the first Anglo-Saxon book printed in England, its date being 1571. The Anglo-Saxon Version is accompanied by the Bishop's, occasionally adapted to the earlier text. It was reprinted by Junius the younger and Marshall in 1638; and by the same editors in a more correct form, with the Gothic in parallel columns, at Dordrecht in 1665, and at Amsterdam in 1684. Dr. Marshall was Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford, he being responsible for the Saxon, and Francis Junius for the Gothic.

To these must be added the Lindisfarne and Rushworth Gospels, already described. We are afraid most of our readers are nodding over these "dry details," but, at at all risks, we must go a little farther, and summarise

* Mombert.

Mr. Skeat's findings on the whole subject. Rev. W. W. Skeat, M.A., Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Cambridge, tells us that he has been engaged for half a century on this work, so that we are probably safe in accepting his conclusions. In 1878 he published the Gospels in the Anglo-Saxon and Northumbrian Versions. He reiterates his opinion that there never was but one Anglo-Saxon version; that the copies of it were never numerous; and that there is little to show that many copies have been lost. Those left to us are intimately connected with each other, though written at different places—one at Bath, and another apparently at Canterbury, the opposite sides of the kingdom. He has now published all four Gospels in one volume, calling it—

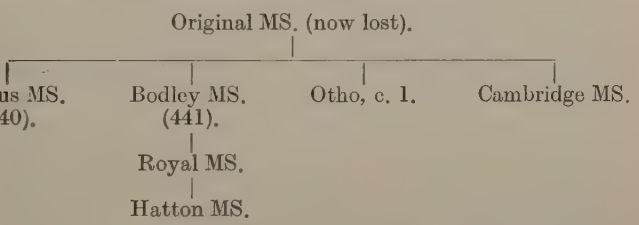
"The Holy Gospels in Anglo-Saxon, Northumbrian, and Old Mercian Versions synoptically arranged, together with the early Latin Version, as contained in the Lindisfarne MS. collated with the Latin Version in the Rushworth MS."

In his Preface to St. Luke, Mr. Skeat adduces further proof that the following can be depended upon:—The Cotton MS. is an absolute duplicate of the Bodley MS., whilst both agree so closely with the Corpus MS. that all three must be mere copies from one not now forthcoming. The Cambridge MS. is also practically the same, and there were probably never any others, these all belonging to the tenth century. These remarks apply to the Anglo-Saxon or Wessex MSS., the Northumbrian glosses being altogether distinct from and independent of them, though not independent of each other.

Mr. Skeat's work was commenced by Mr. Kemble, son of the actor, who, however, only executed a small portion of it. The utmost care and discrimination are exercised in this large and important publication, and all who desire to enter into the minute details of our earliest Bible-work must not fail to sit at the feet of these last and safest guides. The volume is both beautiful and arranged in the most instructive way. On one page is shown the Anglo-Saxon and Northumbrian versions—

that is, the Rushworth and Durham Books, together with the Anglo-Saxon MS. in Corpus Christi Library, Cambridge, and the Hatton MS. from the Bodleian Library, Oxford, with various readings from the other MSS.

Mr. Kemble's work was on St. Matthew only, though it was published on much the same lines as Mr. Skeat's. Whether the original can or not, Mr. Skeat thinks that most of these extant MSS. may be referred to the tenth century, and his conclusions may be summarised thus:—



We have already referred to the printed edition of the Gospels published by Mr. B. Thorpe, F.S.A., in 1842. He based his text on the MS. in the Cambridge University Library, consulting also the Corpus MS., the Bodleian, and the Cottonian. This was reprinted in New York by Dr. Klipstein in 1851, showing that the New World was becoming interested in such studies of our earliest literature. In his Preface, Mr. Thorpe calls Archbishop Parker the preserver of our Saxon MSS. and restorer of Saxon learning.

Special attention, however, must be given to the splendid publication of Bosworth and Waring in 1865. This contains the Gothic Gospels of Ulphilas, the Anglo-Saxon, Wycliffe's, and Tyndale's. The Gothic and Anglo-Saxon are closely allied, both being of Low German origin, according to Maxmuller, and such a volume is extremely interesting to the Englishman.

The version of Ulphilas dates back to the fourth century, when he was Bishop amongst the Dacians. The Heathen Goths settled in Dacia, on the north-west of the Black Sea, and whilst resident there they became Christians.

Before the Ecumenical Council of Nice (325) they had become so numerous as to have their own bishops, and Ulphilas was the most celebrated of them. It became, indeed, a proverb amongst the Goths: "Whatever is done by Ulphilas is well done." He discharged his episcopal duties for forty years, and died at Constantinople. Well may the Preface to this noble volume exclaim: "What vigour and decision of mind, when Greek and Latin were the only languages employed for literary purposes!" His version is the Codex Argenteus, or the Silvery Book, the letters appearing to be silver, and it is now in the Royal Library of Upsala. Here is a comparison of the three texts:—

GOTHIC.	ANGLO-SAXON.	ENGLISH.
Ik im thata daur.	Ic eom geat.	I am the door.
Kaurno whaiteis.	Huoetene corn.	A corn of wheat.
Wheitos swe snaiws.	Swa hwite swa snaw.	White as snow.

A second edition was published in 1874.

Archbishop Parker was assisted by his "learned scribe," Jocelin, and the splendid collection of MSS. collected by him and bequeathed to Corpus Christi College is preserved according to his exact and exacting instructions. He evidently felt that, however neglected in the past, such stores would have a high value in the future; and their worth to-day, when all things relating to the origin and beginnings of the English people are at a premium, is incalculable.

Of course, however, throughout all this period the Latin Version completely ruled the day. These Saxon glosses were curiosities then, as they are curiosities now. With Augustine came two copies of the Gospels, of the same size, and written in the same Roman uncials. One of these is now in Corpus Christi Library, and the other in the Bodleian. From the Oxford one a great many copies were taken. The rubrics direct that certain portions of Scripture shall be read at particular seasons. When Ethelbert made his laws, they were based, no doubt, on

this known Scripture teaching; and Alfred, as we have seen, placed the Commandments at the head of his, incorporating also many passages from the Gospels.

To recur to the subject touched on before, and which it is important to observe, it is beyond doubt that the reading and writing out of the Scriptures was encouraged by our fathers in the Saxon Church. In their Homilies, for instance, we find the following: "The reading of the Holy Scriptures purges the soul of the reader. It brings to mind the fear of eternal punishment; it lifts up his heart to things above. Whosoever would be together with God, he ought to pray often, and often to read the Holy Scriptures."

Very simple directions and encouragements, but observable when we remember what a very different language was afterwards held on the subject, and how, in the home of freedom, it came to be a capital offence to be found even possessing a single Gospel that could be intelligently read. Fuller tells us, indeed, of one Ricemarch, a Briton, son of Sulgen, Bishop of St. David's, who made this epigram on those who translated the Psalter out of the Greek, so taking it second-hand :—

> "This harp the holy Hebrew text doth tender,
> Which, to their power, whilst everyone doth render,
> In Latin tongue with many variations
> He clouds the Hebrew rays with his translations.
> Thus liquors when twice shifted out and poured
> In a third vessel, are both cooled and soured;
> But holy Jerome truth to light doth bring
> Briefer and fuller, fetched from the Hebrew Spring."

The Rev. H. C. Leonard, M.A., has published a translation of the Anglo-Saxon version of St. Mark, which will enable us to read a chapter as our forefathers conceived it.* The text followed is that of Professor Bosworth, mainly based upon the MS. in Corpus Christi Library, Cambridge. Mr. Leonard says that Anglo-Saxon is more correctly "the West Saxon dialect of Old English," and he has produced a decidedly successful modern rendering.

* J. Clarke & Co., 1881.

Here is the last chapter, which we give the whole of, it being the shortest :—

"And when Saturn's day was gone, the Magdalenish Maria and Jacobus's Maria and Salome brought spice mixture that they might come and smear him. And very early on rest day they came to the burying place, the sun having sprung up. And they said between them, Who will roll us the stone from the burying place's door? When they saw it they saw the stone rolled away; truly it was very great. And when they went into the burying place they saw a young man sitting on the right side, covered over with a white garment, and then they feared. Then saith he to them, Fear ye not, ye seek the Nazarene Saviour, hanged; he arose, he is not here; here is the place where they laid him. But go forth and say to his learning-knights and to Petrus, that he goeth before you into Galilee; there ye shall see him as he said to you. And they went out and fled from the burying place, and were afraid at the sight that they saw, and they said nought to no man, truly they dreaded.

"When he arose in the early morning on rest day, first he showed himself to the Magdalenish Maria out of whom he drove out seven devil sicknesses, and she then went out and told it to them that were with him mourning and weeping. When they heard that he lived and that she had seen him, then they believed her not. After that he was shown to two of them in another form as they went into the field, and they went and told it to the others, and they believed them not. Then next he showed himself to the 11, where they sat together, and blamed their unbelief and their heart hardness, for that they believed not them that had seen him risen from death.

"And He said to them :—Go into the middle earth and preach the good news to every creature. He that believeth and is washed, he shall be safe; truly he that believeth not, he shall be condemned. These tokens shall follow them that believe; in My name they shall drive out devil sicknesses; they shall speak with new tongues; they

shall do away with serpents; and it shall not hurt them if they drink what is death bearing; on the sick they shall set their hands and they shall be hale.

"And truly the Lord the Saviour after that He spake to them He was taken up into the Heavens, and He sitteth on God's right side. Truly then, they, having gone forth, preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with after following tokens."

Mr. Leonard emphasises the value of the Anglo-Saxon Version as being made from the Vetus Italica of the second century, a long time before Jerome's Vulgate; and of its being a real translation, and not a transference of words, often full of idiomatic energy.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ANGLO-SAXON PSALTERS

"The history of our childhood, the explanation of our manhood."
J. M. Kemble, M.A.

Whilst the New Testament thus chiefly engaged the attention of our early translators, there are several Psalters also to which we must now give our attention.

A noteworthy illustration of the power of the Gospel is found in Guthlac, to whom we perhaps owe one of these. He was born in 674, and was known as the hermit of Crowland. Belonging to a noble family, he soon distinguished himself in war at the head of his band, but in his twenty-fourth year he underwent a sudden conversion, lasting in its effects. He gave up military pursuits and all that had been connected with his early wild life, repaired to a monastery, and soon afterwards crossed over to Crowland, then a desolate island in the midst of the swamps off the extreme south coast of Lincolnshire. The reputation which he came to have for piety led to the heaping up of monkish tales, and the description of what poor Guthlac endured from evil spirits during his novitiate as a hermit is perhaps scarcely equalled in literature. It was Tatwin that guided him there, in a fisher's boat, telling him that no one had ever been able to live in the island. Here is the description of what happened when Guthlac braved it out:—"Not long after, St. Guthlac being awoke in the night-time, betwixt his hours of prayer, as he was accustomed, of a sudden he discerned his cell to be full of black troops of unclean

DAVID AND HIS CHOIR.

ANGLO-IRISH ; EARLY EIGHTH CENTURY.

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spirits, which crept in under the door, as also at chinks and holes, and coming in both out of the sky and from the earth, filled the air as it were with dark clouds. In their looks they were cruel and of form terrible, having great heads, long necks, lean faces, pale countenances, ill-favoured beards, rough ears, wrinkled foreheads, fierce eyes, stinking mouths, teeth like horses, spitting fire out of their throats, crooked jaws, broad lips, loud voices, burnt hair, great cheeks, high breasts, rugged thighs, bunched knees, bended legs, swollen ancles, preposterous feet, open mouths, and hoarse cries; who with such mighty shrieks were heard to roar that they filled almost the whole distance from Heaven with their bellowing noises, and by and bye rushing into the house, first bound the holy man; then drew him out of his cell and cast him over head and ears into the dirty fen; and having so done, carried him through the most rough and troublesome parts thereof, drawing him amongst brambles and briers for the tearing of his limbs." *

Here is the piling up of the agony, with a vengeance. Luther's imaginary encounter with Satan at the Wartburg, when he threw the inkstand at him, Dunstan's at Glastonbury, when he applied the red-hot tongs to his nose, sink into insignificance. However, he continued to live on as a hermit, and his fame for piety and wisdom attracted many to his marshy swamp. Amongst them were "nobles, bishops, abbots, and rich people," so that we must believe that the family to which he belonged had something to do with his popularity.

He was ordained a priest by Hedda, Bishop of Lichfield, but stayed where he was; and though often plagued by temptations and visions, he found distraction in the cultivation of the soil and the giving of spiritual counsel. One day he said to a visitor: "Whoever hath led his life after God's will, the wild beasts and wild birds have become more intimate with him; and the man who will pass his life apart from worldly men, to him the angels approach nearer."

* Gough, quoted in the History of Crowland Abbey.

Felix wrote his Life at the request of King Ethelbald, who erected a monastery on the site of his cell and oratory. He says that even kings visited him, and speaks of his church and servants, and of there being houses on the island. Perhaps this was later, as his fame grew, for his original enthusiasm led him to wear skins only, and to make his diet a morsel of barley bread and some cups of muddy water after sundown. His sister he declined to see until they met in heaven, though she was living within a few miles of him. She came, when he had died, to place his corpse in the sarcophagus, as he had requested. All sorts of wonderful miracles and cures are reported of him.* Willet says a copy of Alfred's Psalter was found in Crowland Abbey, called St. Guthlac's Psalter, as "Master Lambert witnesseth." † There are no Psalms in the Exeter Book, however, and any of Guthlac's have vanished long ago. What is in the Exeter Book is Felix's Life or Legend, a metrical paraphrase by one of the monks of Crowland Abbey, called Felix, whose Life of St. Guthlac is printed in the *Acta Sanctorum Benedictorum*. It is given in very short sentences, and has to do with his temptations, conquests over sin, and death. The latter part, containing the journey of Beccel, the friend and companion of Guthlac, to announce the death of the saint to his sister, is expressed with great beauty of diction.

This Exeter Book is a small but very thick folio, containing a large number of Anglo-Saxon writings. It was written on vellum in a fair and rather fine hand about the tenth century, and was published by the Society of Antiquaries in 1842, under the editorship of Mr. B. Thorpe, F.S.A. It contains a large number of Saxon riddles, and a miscellaneous collection of poetry, amongst which is the inevitable "harrowing of Hell," a poem on the panther, the departed soul's address to the body, the

* *St. Guthlac*, W. de Gray Birch. C. W. Goodwin, M.A., also published St. Guthlac's Life in 1848. The description of the horrors is from the Vercelli Book.

† Willet's Synopsis. Willet lived 1562 to 1621, so this represents what was current then.

wonders of creation, the seafarer, a father's instruction to his sons, the endowments and pursuits of men, the wanderer, a legend of St. Juliana, the Phœnix, etc. etc.

Rather an extensive range for our supposedly untutored ancestors! It was presented to the library of his Cathedral by Leofric, the first Bishop of Exeter.

We come to solid ground when we describe the volume published by the Surtees Society in 1845. What is the

CROWLAND ABBEY (SOUTH-WEST VIEW).

Surtees Society? some of our readers will ask. Well, it is a Society established for the publication of works which belong to the north of England, illustrating the life of the period, and it has done an extremely useful work, and is doing it still.

At a meeting of the Council in 1845, it was resolved that the Lindisfarne Psalter, and with it the Early English Metrical Translation of the Psalms, should be printed. They were edited by the Rev. J. Stevenson, who says

that the Latin version differs considerably from the Vulgate, and as originally written, differed much more, an attempt having been made to produce its approximation by numerous erasures and alterations. This Latin version formerly belonged to the monastery of St. Augustine, in Canterbury, and there can be little doubt that it is one of the books sent by Gregory the Great to Augustine some time after his arrival here. The veritable book can be "handled and seen" in the British Museum Library, where it is amongst its most precious treasures.* It corresponds with Thomas of Elmham's description of one of the two Psalters said to have been acquired from Augustine. The interlinear English gloss was written at the end of the ninth or the beginning of the tenth century. It is probably of Northumbrian origin, since it agrees closely with the Lindisfarne and Rushworth Gospels, and the Durham Ritual.

The corresponding metrical version is printed from three MSS., all preserved in the British Museum. The text adopted is that of the Cottonian MS., Vesp. D. 7, which, upon the whole, was found to be the purest and most correct. The MS. bears the name of a former possessor, whose it was before it came into the hands of Sir Robert Cotton—"Sum Gulielmi Charci." It belongs to the reign of Edward II.

The various readings given at the bottom of the page have been gathered partly from the Egerton MS. and partly from the Harleian MS. The former is a quarto volume, written upon vellum, in a hand little, if at all, later than the Cottonian MS. It contains 100 leaves, each page consisting of about 32 lines. It formerly belonged to Gilbert Barrell, or Barrett, and subsequently to John Fauntleroy, the names being inscribed on the fly-leaves. It was purchased by the Trustees of the British Museum in May 1836, from Mr. Rodd, the bookseller.

The Harleian MS. is a folio volume, written upon vellum in a bold, rough hand, and is apparently a little later. It formerly belonged to the monastery of Kirkham, in

* Cottonian MS., Vesp. A. 1.

Yorkshire, as appears by an inscription which describes it as a "liber monasterii de Kirkham." It came into the possession of Lord Oxford, the founder of the Harleian Library, from the collection of Mr. Noble. Besides the English version, it contains the Psalter in Latin and French.

Valuable help in connection with this important publication was rendered by R. Garnett, of the British Museum Library. We give examples from the 1st Psalm and the 8th :—

Psalm I.

"1. Seli bern, that noght is gan
In ye rede of wicked man;
And in streta of sinfulle noght he stode,
He sat in setel of storme un-gode
2. Bot in lagh of Laverd his wille be ai
And his lagh think he night and dai
3. And als his live, swa sal it be
Als it fares bi a tre,
That stremes of watres set in here,
That gives his fruit in time of yhere;
And lef of him to dreve me sal
What swa he does sal soundefulle al
4. Noght swa wicked men, noght swa,
Bot als duste that wind yerthe tas fra.
5. And tharfore wike in dome noght rise,
Ne sinfulle in rede of rightwise.
6. For Laverd of rightwise wate ye wai,
And gate of wicked for worth sal ai.
Blisse to ye Fadre and to ye Sone,
And to ye Hali Gaste, wil with am wone:
Als first was, es, and ai sal be;
In werlde of werldes to ye Thre."

Psalm VIII.

"2. Lauerd, oure Lauerd, how selkouth is
Name thine in alle land this
For upehouen es thi my Kelhede
Ower heuens that ere brade
3. Of mouth of childer and soukand
Made thou lof in ilka land
For thi faes; that thou forde
Ye faa, ye wrcker him unto." *

* Cotton Tiberius, C. 6.

The Palæographical Society has published a splendid volume, containing the Latin Psalter, with an English interlinear gloss. The text is ornamented by finely coloured borders and initials, and a few drawings. Some of these are delicately drawn in outline, tinted very slightly, and with light colours. The English text was probably written about the time of Edward the Confessor (1041–66).*

In 1835, also, Mr. B. Thorpe, F.S.A., printed an English Psalter.

This has been thought to be Aldhelm's, though there is no sufficient evidence.

Here is a specimen of it: "Utan to brecan heora bendas and aweorpan heora geocu of us"—"Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us."

Mr. Mombert mentions two other prose versions of the Psalter,† with notes. The first is in the Harleian Library (93 D. 2), and the following may serve as an example:—

PSALM II. 1.—"Quare fremuerunt gentes—Why gnastes the gens and the pep!e thoughte ydil thingis? The prophete snybband hem that tormentid Crist saies whit the gens thoo were the knyttes of rome that crucified Crist, gnasted as bestes with oute resoun; and the peple thoo were the iewes, thoughte vaynte thoughtes; that was to holde Crist ded in sepulchre, that thei might not doo, forthi in veyne thei traucilde."

The other MS. is an imperfect copy of a translation of the Psalms from 89 to 118 (King's Library, 1517).

Here is an example:—

"PSALMUS 89 (90th in our version).—Domine refugium. Lord, Thou art made refuge to us fro generacioun to generacioun. Here the profete, after sharp reprouynge of vicious men, was movid of the hooly goost to ymagin and to knowe that malicious enmytee and feers pursuying wole sue sone after."

* *Specimens of Early English*, Morris and Skeat, 1894.
† *English Versions.*

In the Cambridge Public Library is an Anglo-Saxon Psalter, the Saxon being written underneath the Latin. This was given by Archbishop Parker to Sir Nicholas Bacon, and by him to the Cambridge Library. The lettering in this is large and handsome, and there is some illumination.

In the library of the Marquis of Buckingham, at Stowe, is another of these ancient Psalters, and one of the oldest. It is in Latin, with interlinear Saxon, and tradition says that the kings and queens took their coronation oaths on it previous to the Reformation. It is a fine volume, and may have been pressed by the hands of Alfred.

Sir John Spelman's Psalter was published as far back as 1640. It is a handsome quarto volume, dedicated to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and in it he gives the various readings from four MSS. The tradition about King Alfred comes up again in connection with this Psalter, the Rev. A. Johnson, M.A., one of the first workers in this field, who published his "Historical Account" in 1730, saying that this was the one King Alfred translated.

In the Corpus Christi Library at Cambridge, also, there is a metrical version of the Psalter. Other MSS. of a similar version are in the Bodleian Library and the British Museum.

In Trinity College, Cambridge, is an admirable Psalter, Latin and Saxon, illuminated, and full of historical pictures. At the end is the figure of the writer Edwin, supposed to be a monk of Canterbury, holding a pen of metal. This probably belongs to Stephen's reign.

One thing we may be thankful for, that in this early period paper was not invented, and the far more durable parchment or vellum was constantly used. Doing their work on such lasting and expensive a material also doubtless had an influence on the scribes, leading them to write carefully and often beautifully, and to illuminate and otherwise adorn their productions. How almost trivial, indeed, do our much-vaunted modern ways appear when examining some of these beautiful old manuscripts in a mullioned window of the great University Library at Cambridge by the side of the imposing King's College

Chapel, where the magnificent organ has been heard at intervals. Here is a little volume of different books of the Old Testament, very plainly bound, but how carefully illuminated and embellished! Red, blue, and black, with gold, are the colours used in the illuminations, which occur frequently. Stains of wet appear here and there, but all looks as if it would last another thousand years, though it is a thousand years old now. At the end, however, is a note:—

"I found this MS. mutilated in thirteen different places; how long it has been the case I can form no conjecture, but in Nasmyth's Catalogue there is no mention of any mutilation. J. P., Librarian.

"Feb. 13, 1849."

Here is the same sort of habit, we fear, in a worse form, as the common one of cutting one's name, carrying off a bit of wood or stone from some famous spot, as if the connection of our own personality with it were anything so very desirable. In spite of all such and worse mishaps, however, these old MSS. are preserved to us, for, as Dr. Giles has well said, many of the monuments of human genius bear a certain impress of eternity, and the most imperishable are the productions of the pen, which will outlive the Pyramids of Egypt, as they have already outlived the fame of their founders.

And they deserved to live, for many of these early manuscripts are not simply interesting to the scholar and the Christian, but they are amongst the loveliest books of the world. The illuminators—at least the later ones—seem to have been in possession of a considerable number of colouring materials, and to have known the arts of preparing and mixing them so as to form a great variety of colours. Not only the fine primary colours are found, but also various combinations of them, oil being probably mixed up with some.*

And for some time now we have been waking up to

* Dibdin's *Bibliographical Decameron.*

the importance and value of these treasures. Sir F. Palgrave complained in 1831 that the early MSS. of Bibles remained mouldering on our shelves. This is not so much so now, the Anglo-Saxon language, or to name it more correctly, the West Saxon dialect of Old English, being no longer an almost unknown tongue.

And we must remember that these early versions have a character of their own, as the following will show :—

1. They were made from the ancient Latin text, known as the Vetus Italica, produced for the benefit of those parts of the Roman Empire where Greek was little known, probably before the end of the second century ; and not from the Vulgate of Jerome, which was used by Wyclif in the fourteenth century, and largely influenced all subsequent translations.

2. The Anglo-Saxon translators aimed at giving their countrymen a version which should be thoroughly idiomatic. What is thus lost in precision is often gained in power.

3. In the choice of words they rarely transferred, where it was possible to translate.*

Thus we have "reste doeg," day of rest ; "dome's doeg," judgment day ; "big spel," parable ; "tungel Witegan," the Magi or Star knowers ; "manfulle and synfulle," publicans and sinners ; "hundred man," centurion ; "learning youth," disciple ; "Woeter seoc man," a man with the dropsy ; "doed bot" (an amends deed), repentance ; "gold hoard," treasury.

So that, even in these rude times of anarchy and blood, when men "laid about them at their wills and died," times through which it seems ordained that every great nation is to pass, there was far from an absolute neglect of that body of truth which is the expanded message of peace and goodwill. We have seen that, within a century of Augustine's landing, every kingdom of the Heptarchy had received the truth, Sussex being the last to yield to its influence. Of course, it is not likely that there was any large circulation of the different manuscripts. Some

* *St. Mark's Gospel*, H. C. Leonard.

were prepared for private use in the different monasteries, and others for the small circle of the immediate friends of the translator.

Sir F. Palgrave says that—"The rubrics prefixed to the lessons of the Anglo-Saxon version of the Gospels leave no reason to doubt but that they were regularly read in the churches on Sundays and Festivals. Large portions of the Scriptures were also reproduced in the Anglo-Saxon homilies or sermons." We may gather from Ælfric's Epistles that, if the Latin was first read, the sense was given afterwards. Thus we find in France, John Beleth, an eminent Paris divine, saying that in the Primitive Church it was forbidden to anyone to speak in an unknown tongue, unless there was someone to interpret, since it was a thing perfectly useless for a man to speak and not be understood. "Hence," he says, "grew that laudable custom in some churches that, after the Gospel was pronounced according to the letter, or read in Latin, immediately it was explained to the people in the vulgar tongue."

Let us hope it got explained correctly, in the main, but often the priests did not know it themselves. In the days of Pope Zachary, one of them said in baptism, "In nomine patria filia, et spirita sancta," which, being called in question, they posted up to Rome at last to ask if the baptism were legal. The Pope, after much consultation, decreed that, though the Latin was bad, the baptism was good.

One thing is certain, that the Book of books entirely supplanted the Saxon superstitions, as it had before swept away those of the Druids, and that Christianity was for centuries the distinctive religion of our impetuous, fair-haired ancestors. The Danes also were converted in large numbers. Their mythology was even more extraordinary than that of the Saxons, their heaven consisting in fighting and cutting each other to pieces every morning, and then returning whole to dine upon a boar, who was hunted and eaten every day, and restored to life every night, that he might be ready for the morrow. Their conversion is the more noteworthy also, inasmuch

as they had been fiercely prejudiced against Christianity by Charlemagne, whose stern victories had made his Faith odious to the Northern marauders. In fact, they had sought refuge in Jutland and Denmark when driven out of Germany by fire and sword, at the instance of the Christian emperor. So, when they came ravaging in England, they made a special point of destroying all

GREENSTEAD CHURCH, ESSEX.
(ONLY SAXON WOODEN NAVE EXTANT.) BUILT A.D. 1012.

the monasteries and churches in their path, leaving nothing behind them at Peterborough but "old walls and wild woods," as Ethelwald found in 963. They were a cruel and barbarous race, and their incursions were constantly the great hindrance to Christianity and civilisation. As they settled down, however, they became converted. Alfred compelled those whom he subdued at least to receive baptism, and before the Norman Conquest not

only they, but all the Scandinavian nations had received the Faith, Canute presenting a somewhat fine figure, and being greatly beloved by all classes, in spite of his being an alien and an invader.*

Thus one people after another within our shores in this early period came under the influence of the Word of truth. Celt, Saxon, and Dane alike received it; and though sometimes, like the fabled holy grail of the same period, it seemed to mock the seeker after its virtues, at other times its lustre was very apparent, and, upon the whole, when the Norman invasion took place, we were a Christian nation.

Surely we in England should know something of the old Saxon literature which belongs to us, though it be, as Dr. Angus says, no modern palace of story or of song, but a weather-stained ruin, with mouldering walls, and here and there a roofless chamber.

* Alfred followed a custom common enough in the Europe of Clovis and Charlemagne. The ordinance was: "If any do reject the Christian religion, or show his esteem for Heathenism, let him pay his were gild (the compensation appointed by the Saxons to be made for offences against the person), or a mulct, or a fine (a Danish penalty), in proportion to the fact." The Danes settled down soon after this; Alfred became the godfather of Guthrum, the Danish chief; and in fact the fruit of this peremptory dealing seems to have been wholly good.

CHAPTER XIV

ÆLFRIC

Μνημονεύετε οἵτινες ἐλάλησαν ὑμιν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ.—HEB. xiii. 7.

WE come now to another famous name, always well known amongst scholars, but more widely so in modern times through the formation of the Ælfric Society in London in 1842, with Lord Egerton for President, and the Chevalier Bunsen and other distinguished men in the roll of its membership. This was established in order to publish his works, and other Anglo-Saxon memorabilia, for as Alfred was the founder, Ælfric was the model of Saxon prose. He was more than that, and no doubt there was another motive present with many of the members of the Ælfric Society. For, whilst translating large portions of the Scriptures, side by side with them he issued a number of Homilies containing the accepted doctrine of the Anglo-Saxon Church. These Homilies are numerous, and in them almost every vital doctrine which distinguished the Roman from the Evangelical Church meets with a direct contradiction. They formed a Harmony of the doctrinal teaching of the Fathers, as received by this Early Church, and were issued by Sigeric, Archbishop of Canterbury, for general use. As such, Queen Elizabeth's first Archbishop, Matthew Parker, revived, and sought to revive in others, the study of Early English, chiefly that it might be seen from such writings where the true antiquity was to be found, and how much opposition there was between our own Early Church and the later doctrines of the Church of Rome. Some of these comparatively

modern but often accounted ancient heresies were then raising their heads, and Ælfric attacks them unceremoniously.

It is decidedly embarrassing, however, to be in doubt, as we are to this day, as to the identity of Ælfric the scholar, Bible translator, and homilist.

There was an Ælfric who was Archbishop of Canterbury 996–1006, and there was another who was Archbishop of York 1023–1051. Wharton, in his *Anglia Sacra*, holds that our scholar was the Primate of York. Sharon Turner speaks of two Ælfrics—"Ælfric Bata," and his scholar Ælfric, the abbot and bishop. Leland found three Ælfrics, but Usher united them all into one, saying that he was first Abbot of Peterbro' in 1004. If he was Archbishop of York, he succeeded Archbishop Wulfstan, but some things are recorded of him which scarcely suit the "gentle scholar." For instance, at his instigation, Hardacnut caused the corpse of his brother, Harold Harefoot, to be taken from the grave, decapitated, and afterwards thrown into the Thames. We are also told that, being angry with the people of Worcester, who had rejected him for their bishop, he again instigated the same king to burn their city and confiscate their property, under the pretext of their having resisted the royal taxgatherers. So William of Malmesbury tells us; but in the Saxon Chronicle it is said: "This year (1052) died Ælfric, Archbishop of York, a very venerable and wise man." Perhaps, however, they were always venerable and wise, when they had died.

If he was the Archbishop of Canterbury, he was first a monk at Abingdon; then he took charge of Cerne Abbey, Dorset; afterwards he was Abbot of St. Albans; then Bishop of Wilton; and finally Primate for ten years.

Leslie Stephens, however, says no name was commoner than Ælfric at this period, and that he was probably made out to be an archbishop because of the importance of his writings. They wanted to father them well; but he could neither have been Archbishop of Canterbury nor of York, he says. It is probable that he was first a

monk at Abingdon, and then at Winchester; then Abbot, first of Cerne and afterwards of Ensham, which was founded by Æthelmær, the great patron of monasticism in the West.*

Whichever he was, or whoever he was, his Homilies became a sort of authorised publication of Anglo-Saxon beliefs, and are thus specially valuable as showing that the Church of our fathers was essentially what we now understand by the word Protestant. He translated abridgments of the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, part of Kings, Esther, Job, and some of the Apocryphal books, composing also an analysis of Old and New Testament history. Matthew Paris tells us that it was at the request of Ethelward, Ealderman of Cornwall, that he undertook the work, the Books of the Maccabees being translated to encourage the people to bear up manfully against the incursions to which they were still subject. He calls his translation English, and seems to have had a practical aim throughout. It is in Joshua that we read about Ethelward. He says: "This book I turned into English for Ealderman Ethelward, a book that a Prince might study, in times of invasion and turbulence." Of Judith he says: "Englished according to my skill, for your example, that you may also defend your country by force of arms, against the outrage of foreign hosts."

One of his chief designs, however, was that ministers should have a better understanding of God's Word, and impart it to others. He speaks as one having authority, and in the Canons gives a special charge that the people should be rightly taught the Scriptures in their own tongue. He required that every clergyman before he was ordained priest should have a collection of all the books used in the service of the Church, as the Psalter, a book containing the Epistles and Gospels, another of the Communion Office, a book of Lessons, a guide for penitents, a Calendar, a book of Chaunts and Hymns, and one containing an account

* Wright says that Ælfrica Bata, who died in 1051, was probably a disciple of the elder Ælfric, and that he republished his Colloquium and Grammar, espoused the same opinions as his master on transubstantiation, and was made Archbishop of York.—*Biog. Brit. Lit.*

of the Saints whose days were kept. He endeavoured to make every book that he translated easy of comprehension, and thus, whilst some of his work is literal and exact, there is much that is paraphrastic. In his Latin Preface, he says he has translated into the ordinary tongue for the edification of the simple, who know only this speech: "We have therefore put it, not into obscure words, but into simple English, that it may easier reach the heart of those who hear or read it." The clergy were strongly enjoined, indeed, to expound the meaning of the Gospel every Sunday in English, and the Creed and the Lord's Prayer as often as they could. "We must not be dumb dogs," he cries, "that cannot bark. We must teach the lay people, lest we lose them for lack of love. If the blind man be the blind man's leader, they will both fall into a blind place. And blind is the teacher if he kens no book lore. Such teachers as take their examples and doctrine from the Holy Books, whether it be out of the Old Testament or New, are such as Christ spake of in these words: 'Every learned scribe in the Church of God is like the master of a family who brings forth ever out of his own treasure things new and old.'" *

The Heptateuch was partly translated and partly epitomised, with a prologue, imperfect at the beginning. The volume is now in the British Museum Library,† and there are 157 leaves of vellum, 13′ by 9′, and it is illustrated by numerous coloured drawings. There are notes on the text in Latin, and occasionally in English, founded on Josephus, Methodius, Jerome, Bede, etc., introduced by a hand belonging to the end of the twelfth century. The coloured drawings extend across the page, and are set in frames, often two and sometimes three on a page. They are in different states of completion, the colours being blue, red, and violet. The hair is usually blue!

Here is a specimen: "Sothlice this fynd yfrahela naman the inforon on egypta lande. He mid his sunum. Se phrum cennida, Ruben, Rubene's suna, Enoh, and Phallu, and Charm, Simeone's sune, Gamuel, and Diamin, and

* L'Isle's Translation.

† Cotton MS. Claudius, B. 4.

Achod, and Jachim, and Saher, and Saul Chananides suna, and Leuias suas suna, Jerson and Chaath."

Which is : " Verily these are the names of the Israelites that entered into the land of Egypt, he and his sons. The firstborn, Reuben, the sons of Reuben, Enoch, and Phallu, and Charmi. The sons of Simeon, Samuel and Diamin and Achod, and Jachim and Sahir, and Saul, son of a Canaanitish woman's son, and the sons of Levi, Jerson and Choath" (Gen. xlvi. 8).

Dr. Mombert gives several other examples, from which we extract the Fourth Commandment : *—

" Gehalga thone restedoeg. Wirc six dagas ealle thine weorc. Se seofotha ys Drihtnes restedoeg thines Godes ; ne wirc thu non weorc on thum doege, ne non thara the mid the beo. On six dagon God geworhte heofenan and eorthan and soe, and ealle tha thing the on him synd, and reste thy seofothan doege, and gehalgode hyne."

He says the obscurity in which the history of Ælfric is shrouded is unquestionably due to the *odium theologicum* of the Romish party. In writing to Archbishop Wulstan, Ælfric says it becomes them as bishops to unclose that book-learning which the Canons teach, especially as the priests themselves do not all understand Latin. Evidently the work was far from easy for him, for he says in his dedication of Genesis to Ethelward : " You bade me, dear, that I should turn from Latin nto English the book Genesis. I thought it would be a heavy thing to grant this, and you said that I need not translate more of the book than to Isaac, because some other man had translated this book from Isaac to the end." Later on, however, he says of the whole Heptateuch—that is, the five books of Moses, Joshua, and Judges—" Moses wrote five books by wonderful appointment. We have turned them truly into English "—is this the first instance of the editorial we, or had he some coadjutor ! " The book that Joshua made I turned also into English some time since for Ethelward Ealderman. The Book of Judges men may read in the English writing into which I translated it."

* *English Versions*, Rev. J. T. Mombert, D.D.

He adds of Job: "I turned formerly some sayings from this into English." *

Ælfric's other writings are as valuable as his translations. The first Anglo-Saxon book that ever issued from the English press was his sermon on Easter Day, which was published in 1567.† He wrote a book of Latin Colloquies, and his Homilies on the Saints are of great and permanent interest. We have seen their character, and, as an illustration, this is the way he speaks in the Homily for the Sixth Sunday after Pentecost: "When each shall show what he hath gained with the pound, then Peter the Apostle shall lead forth the Jewish people, whom he through his doctrine hath reduced to the Faith; Paul the Apostle of the nations shall then lead forth almost all the world."

The Homilies were by no means controversial as a rule, however, and are full of biography which is interesting as showing the facts accepted then. Here, for instance, is the account of the first British martyr, Diocletian's persecution being said to have lasted fully ten years:— "When asked his name by the judge, Diocletian's creature, St. Alban replied: 'I am hight Albanus, and I believe in the Saviour, who is the true God, and made all creatures; to Him I pray, and Him will I ever worship.' The murderer answered the glorious man: 'If thou wilt have the felicity of the everlasting life, then thou must not delay to sacrifice to the great gods with full submission.' Alban answered him: 'Your sacrifices to the gods, which ye offer to devils, cannot help you, nor profit your cause, but ye shall receive as your meed everlasting punishments in the wide reaching Hell.' Lo, then the judge became fiendishly irate, and commanded men to scourge the holy martyr. The executioner refused to use the sword, and was afterwards slain himself." ‡

* E. Thwaites printed *Ælfric* in 1598.

† With the imprimatur of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and thirteen Bishops; and with an interesting introduction on the state of the Anglo-Saxon Church.

‡ The MS. is in the Public Library at Cambridge, small folio. There are also copies in the British Museum and Bodleian.

It is a wonder these old manuscripts have been preserved through all these ages to adorn the libraries of the twentieth century. The Danes burnt and destroyed such things whenever they could, and the Norman nobility and ecclesiastics often tossed them aside as old and useless. In a catalogue in 1248 of books in the library of Glastonbury, this entry appears: "Two English manuscripts, old and useless." If they were not burnt or destroyed, however, they were likely to last. Books were rare; great pains were taken with them; and parchment, ink, and illuminations are often found to be very much as they were a thousand years ago. From some of the recipes still extant, we find that they put the parchment under lime, and let it lie for three days; then they stretched it, scraped it well on both sides, dried it, and stained it with any colours they wished. To gild their skins, we have these directions:—

"Take the red skin, and carefully pumice it, and temper it in tepid water, and pour the water on it till it runs off limpid. Stretch it afterwards and smooth it diligently with clean wood. When it is dry, take the whites of eggs, and smear it therewith thoroughly; sponge it with water, press it, dry it again, and polish it; then rub it with a clean skin, and polish it again, and gild it."

So these venerable Fathers of our Church wandered about a long time in sheepskins and goatskins, till the printer came with his art, and superseded both the writing and the thing written on. Ælfric's works have been published a number of times, and we have in them a worthy conclusion to our Anglo-Saxon literature proper. He was very anxious about their correct reproduction, though he little thought of such an art as that of the printer enshrining them, and cries out to his imaginary copyists—

"Look, you who write this book, write it by this example; and for God's love make it that it be less to the writer's credit for beauty than for reproach to me.

"I pray now if anyone will write this book, that he make it well from this example, because I would not

yet bring into it any error, through false writers. It will be then his fault, not mine. The unwriter doth much evil, if he will not rectify his mistake."

Yes, the time has come when these beginnings of our literature are no longer "vetusta et inutilia," though even in recent times there was woeful neglect. In 1792 Archbishop Newcome published his *Historical View of English Biblical Translations*, in which, after giving one single page to all the known Saxon MSS., he says: "Our Reformers alleged these and other Saxon versions, *which I need not enumerate*, as proofs that allowing the use of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue was not a new conceit."

The Ælfric Society published the Homilies, under the editorship of Mr. B. Thorpe, F.S.A., in 1843. They are the most ancient in any of the Germanic tongues, and a timely vindication of the true Protestant character of the early Saxon Church. Mr. Thorpe says that Ælfric must have been the Archbishop of York, who died in 1051. From the words of his own Preface, where he speaks of King Æthelred's days as past, and tells us that in those days he was only a monk and mass priest, he could not have been the Archbishop of Canterbury, who died A.D. 1006, or ten years before the death of King Æthelred. Mrs. Elizabeth Elstob endeavoured to publish Ælfric at the beginning of the eighteenth century, but "hindrances strewed all the way." The first time she only got as far as the thirty-sixth page, and the second only to the second leaf!

CHAPTER XV

AFTER THE COMING OF THE NORMANS—THE ORMULUM

"The revival of learning in most countries appears to have first owed its rise to translation. At rude periods the modes of original thinking are unknown, and the arts of original composition have not been studied. The writers therefore of such periods are chiefly and usefully employed in importing the ideas of other languages into their own. They do not venture to think for themselves, but they are laying the foundations of literature, and while they are naturalising the knowledge of more learned ages and countries by translation they are imperceptibly improving the national language."

WARTON'S *History of English Poetry.*

THE Norman invasion checked, rather than otherwise, the progress of Scriptural knowledge. The Pope had blessed William the Conqueror's banners, and Lanfranc, his Primate, as one of the means to strengthen Pope Hildebrand's power, seized all the copies of the Scriptures he could find, under pretence of correcting any errors with which the text had been corrupted.* In every way, indeed, the authority of Rome was henceforth upheld far more than formerly, the Archbishop of Canterbury becoming the Pope's Legate. In fact, Popery was nearly at its height, and without William the Norman's invasion would soon have made herself more strongly felt in little Britain. It was only eleven years after the battle of Hastings that Gregory VII., the founder of its spiritual despotism, put his ban upon Henry IV. of Germany, absolved his subjects from their allegiance, and kept the emperor waiting for days, like a beggar, at the door of his Castle of Canossa, in the winter. The withdrawing

* *Secret History of Romanism*, Massy.

of the Bible began about the same time. John VIII., Gregory's predecessor, had allowed the use of the vulgar tongue in the public worship of the Church, but Gregory considered this very objectionable, and he added—

"God has ordained that, in some places, Holy Scripture should remain unknown, because, if all could easily understand it, it might, through being despised or misinterpreted, lead the people into error."

Here we have that fatal jealousy of allowing the people to read the Bible for themselves which afterwards ripened into the Bible-burnings at St. Paul's Cross, and the Decrees of Trent. Latin soon began to die out as a vernacular, and this opened the way to the reservation of the Scriptures from the people altogether.

Books of all sorts were very dear. In 1174 the Abbot of Westminster gave to the monks of Dorchester, for Bede's Homilies and St. Augustine's Psalter, twelve measures of barley and a rich pall embroidered with a saintly history in silver.

The Universities were very small affairs as yet. Oxford and Cambridge were successively burned and plundered by Danes and Normans, and Paris was the city to which the great proportion of Norman youths went, being called the City of Learning by writers of the twelfth century. Here they learnt a system of divinity founded largely on Aristotle, which led the way to the Schoolmen, with their pedantic and whimsical discussions. Oxford, indeed, only had 243 houses when Domesday Book was compiled, and in 1141 Stephen reduced to ashes all that remained of the city. Almost every cathedral, convent, and abbey, however, was practically a school.

But the stream of Bible translations and paraphrases did not cease in the altered conditions of the people, and we now come to the *Ormulum*, a paraphrase of the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles preserved in the Bodleian Library. This has had the advantage of being edited more than once lately, and the portion preserved contains about 20,000 lines, the words used numbering 2300. Some rank it immediately after the Conquest, and others

about the commencement of the thirteenth century. Its author's name was Orme, or Ormin, and he was a monk of the Order of St. Augustine, living at a priory possibly in the north of England. It was at the request of his threefold "Brother Walter," in the flesh, in baptism, and in the Order, that he planned and executed his work, the object of which was doubtless to bring the Gospel story straight home to the understanding of the people. The rhythm which he provided for them was one through which pleasant tales might be told to them by the wayside and on "ember eves and holy ales," and he selected those portions of the New Testament which were read in the church, each part having a Homily, doctrinal and practical.

He speaks thus of himself and his work :—

Nu brotherr Wallter brotherr min	Now brother Walter, brother mine
Affter the flaeshess kinde	After the nature of the flesh
And brotherr min i Crisstenndom	And brother mine in Christendom
Durrh fulluhht and thurrh trowwthe	Through baptism and belief
And brotherr min i Godess hus	And brother mine in God's house
Yet o the thridde wise	Yet of the third manner
Durrh thatt witt hafenn taken ba	Because that we two have taken both
An reyhell-boc to follyhenn	One rule-book to follow
Unnderr kanunnkess had and lif	Under canon's rank and life
Swa summ Sannt Awwstinn sette	As Saint Austin appointed,
Icc hafe wennd intill Ennglissh	I have turned into English
Goddspelless hallyhe lare	The Gospel's holy learning
Affterr thatt little witt thatt me	According to the little wit that to me
Min Drihhtin hafeththn lenedd.	My Lord has granted.
And unnc birrth bathe thannken Crist	And it befits us both to thank Christ
Thatt itt iss brohtt till ende.	That it is brought to an end.
Icc hafe sammnedd o this boc	I have joined in this book
Tha Goddspelless neh alle	The Gospels nearly all
Thatt sinndenn o the messeboc	That are in the mass-book
Inn all the yer att messe,	In all the year at mass,
And agg affter the Goddspell stannt	And ever after the Gospel stands
Thatt tatt te Goddspell menethth.	That which the Gospel meaneth.

We may select one of these Homilies as a sample of the Biblical teaching of the time. Professor Morley enables us to sit at the feet of this ancient translator and commentator.*

He gives the opening of the Homily in Ormin's English, with an interlinear translation, and then modernises

* *Illustrations of English Religion*, edited and arranged by Henry Morley.

the rest, but without attempting to reproduce, in our uninflected language, the weak fifteenth syllable once formed by an inflection.

"Sic Deus dilexit mundum ut filium suum unigenitum daret."—JOHN iii. 16.

CHRIST'S TEACHING OF NICODEMUS.

Thurrh thatt te Laferrd seggde * thuss
In that the Lord said thus
Till Nicodem withth worde:
To Nicodemus with word:
Swa lufede the Laferrd Godd
So loved the Lord God
The werelld tatt he sennde
The World that he sent
His aghenn sune Allmahhtig Godd
His own Son Almighty God
To wurrthen mann onn erthe
To become man on earth
To lesenn mannkinn thurrh hiss death
To release mankind through his death
Ut off the defless walde,
Out of the devil's power,
Thatt whase trowwenn shall onn himm
That whosoever shall believe in him
Wel mughe wurrthenn borrghenn;
Surely † may become saved;
Thær thurrh he dide Nicodem
By that he caused Nicodemus
To sen and unnderrstanndenn,
To see and understand
Thatt he wass Godd himm sellf, off Godd,
That he was God himself, from God,
And Godess Sune ankennedd,
And God's Son acknowledged,
And wurrthenn mann o moder hallf
And become man on mother's side
Thurrh sothfasst herrsummnesse,
Through faithful obedience,

* Seggde. The italic *g* stands for the *g* softened to *y* or *gh* sound.

† The old common use of the word *well* as an intensive, still found in idiomatic phrases as "*well* on in years," or "*well*-nigh dead," or "you may *well* say that," is so far weakened that its sense is sometimes better given by another word.

Thurr-thatt his Faderr haffde himm sennd
Because his Father had sent him
And gifenn himm to manne,
And given him for man,
To tholenn death o rode tre
To suffer death on the cross
Forr all mannkinne nede,
For all mankind's need,
All thurrh thatt lufe, and thurrh thatt lusst
All through that love and through that desire
That tegg till mannkinn haffdenn,
That they had towards mankind,
Forth withth thatt Hallghe Frofre Gast
Also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter
Thatt cumethth off hemm bathe,
That cometh of them both,
All thurrh thatt lufe and thurrh thatt lusst
All through that love and through that desire
That tegg till mannkinn haffden,
That they had towards mankind,
To lesenn menn off defless band
To release men from bonds of the devil,
And ut off helle pine,
And out of the pain of hell,
That whase trowwenn shollde o Crist
That whoso should believe on Christ
Wel shollde wurrthen borrghen.
Surely should be saved.
Whi seggde Crist to Nicodem
Why said Christ to Nicodemus
That Drihhtin Godd off heffne
That the Lord God of Heaven
Swa lufede thiss middell ærd,
So loved this mid-earth,
Thiss werelld, tatt he sennde
This world, that he sent
Hiss aghenn Sune, Allmahhtig Godd,
His own Son, Almighty God,
To tholenn dæth o rode,
To suffer death on the cross,
Als iff he shollde lesenn ut
So that he should deliver
The middell ærd off helle ?
The mid-earth from hell ?
Thurrh whatt wass heffness whel forrgarrt
For what was heaven's wheel (the firmament) compelled
To dreghen helle pine ?
To suffer pain of hell ?

And lifft, and land, and waterrflod,
And air, and land, and waterflood,
Hu wærenn thegg forrwrohhte
How were they condemned
To dreghenn wa withth mikell rihht
To suffer woe with much right
Inn helle withth the defell ?
In hell with the devil ?
Off thise fowre shaffte iss all
Of these four created things (elements) is all
Thiss middell werelld timmbredd,
This middle world built,—
Of heffness whel and off the lifft,
Of the firmament and of the air,
Off waterr, and off erthe ;
Of water and of earth ;
And i tha fowre shafftess niss
And in these four elements is (not)
Nowwtherr,—ne lif ne sawle
Neither—nor life, nor soul
That mihhte gilltenn anig gillt
That might be guilty of any guilt
And addlenn helle pine.
And deserve pain of hell.

We ought to know now that for us
The World here signifies
Created thing that was condemned
To suffer pain of hell.
The World here signifies for us
The race of man alone ;
And since man's body is made up
Of what is in the world :
Of heaven's fire, and of the air,
Of water, and of earth :
And since man's Soul is through the world
Here surely signified,
For both of them fall into one
After the Greekish speech,
For Cosmos * all the world is called,
So as the Greeks explain,

* *Cosmos.* The Greek κόσμος means in the first instance order (from κομέω, I take care of), that which depends on thought and care ; order of dress, clothes (the sense on which Ormin here dwells) ; order of behaviour ; order of private life ; order of a state ; order or system

Because it worthily is clothed
With sun and moon and stars
All round about the firmament,
Through God that wrought it so;
And eke it worthily is clothed,
That know'st thou well forsooth,
With air and land and water-flood
With creatures manifold,
The Soul, too, worthily is clothed
By God, after its kind,
With immortality, also
With wit and will and mind;
And therefore saith the Lord our God
The Soul is his likeness,
For that they both, the Soul and God,
Are ever without end,
And they have mind, and will and wit,
But not upon one wise:
For always God hath it in Him,
And ever and aye it had;
The Soul receives her excellence
All from the hand of God,
Where'er he shapeth Soul from nought
All as himself shall please.
And the World therefore in this place
But signifies mankind,
For both of them fall into one
Even as I have shown:
For either worthily is clothed,
But not upon one wise,
And yet the clothing of them both
Cosmos will signify.
And Man therefore thou mayest call
After the Greekish speech,
Microcosmos, the which we call
After the English speech,
The little World, and all for this:
Because the Soul of man
God has clothed worthily and well
With God and righteousness.
And even as this World is clothed
With creatures beautiful,

of the universe. The range of the word is from the divine order that fills the world with beauty down to Livia's cosmetic—

——"A light fucus
To touch you o'er withal."

(Ben Jonson's *Sejanus.*)

The World also may signify
Mankind therefore the better,
Because man's body is made up
And wrought of creatures four,—
Of heaven's fire, and of the air,
Of water, and of earth.
And therefore here the World must mean
Only the race of Man
That Word of God was sent by God
To loosen out of hell.

And of the Son of Man, and Son
Also of God, of both,
Christ here hath told to Nicodeme
The one truth in these words:
That whoso shall believe on him
He surely shall be saved.
And that was said as if he thus
With open speech had said:
For this I have come down from Heaven
To be a man on earth,
That whoso shall believe in me
And shall obey my laws,
Worthy shall he be with me
To have eternal bliss.
But this Christ said to Nicodeme
That he might understand
That he himself was God and Man,
One person, that should save
Mankind from hell and give to men
To win the bliss of heaven.
And that the Lord hath there declared
With words to Nicodeme,
That the Almighty hath not sent
His Son that he should judge
This world, but that he should redeem
It from the Devil's power;—
That said he then to cause him so
To see and understand
That he was sent and made as man
To rescue men from hell.
Through love he bore himself, and through
Love of his Father too
And Holy Ghost, the Comforter,
Proceeding from them both,
Through that he was not come down then
To judge the people all,

But in humility to save
The world by his own grace.
And that he there to Nicodeme
Yet spake thus of himself:
Whoso believeth upon him
That man is not condemned;—
That was as if he had thus said
To him with open speech:
The man that shall believe on me
And shall obey my laws,
That same man will not be condemned
To suffer pain of hell.
And that he there to Nicodeme
Yet spake thus of himself:
And whoso believes not in him
With full and willing truth
Already is condemned by God
To suffer pain of hell;—
That was as if he had thus said
To him with open speech:
The man that believes not on me
With full and willing truth,
But shall through haughtiness and hate
Reject all that I teach,
Already is condemned by me
To suffer pain of hell:
For since that I am truly God
Full easily I know
All those in whom I shall be pleased
Who earn the bliss of heaven,
And those by whom I shall be scorned
Who earn the pain of hell,
Of all the folk that from this day
To Doomsday shall be born.
For all the folk that ever was,
And all that yet shall be,
It is already judged and set
In book, told, measured out,
By God, and now he seëth all
That each one man shall find,
What meed shall be the recompense
Of each one for his deeds.
The Highest how the doom shall go
All knows, and ever knew,
For eye of God and wit of God
All sees, all learns, all knows,
Both that that was, and that that is,
And that that yet shall be;

And if thou art redeemed that is
All through the Lord God's grace,
And through thy labour to win that,
Strong with the Lord God's help.
And if that thou art not redeemed,
That is all through thy sin,
And through right doom thou'rt then condemned
To suffer pain of hell
According to what thou hast earned,
And neither less nor more.

And that he there to Nicodeme
Yet spake thus of himself:
And he that shall not upon him
Believe, is now condemned
Because that he believeth not
As he ought to believe
Upon that one appointed name
Of God's Son upon earth,
On him that is of God the Lord
Only begotten Son;—
That was as if he had said thus
To him with open speech:
That man who wholly shall refuse
To trust and to believe
That I am by my Father sent,
Made Saviour on earth,
And whoso shall through hate and scorn,
And through his pride of heart,
My name all utterly despise
That calls me Saviour,—
The name that shall bring health to all
Who ever shall be healed,
The name that shall redeem all who
Shall ever be redeemed
Through me that am of God the Lord
Only begotten Son,
Son so begotten that I am
All one in Deity
With Father and with Holy Ghost
Withouten ord and end,*

* *Ord and end*, beginning and end. This is the original of our phrase "odds and ends." "Ord" was a First-English noun that meant "beginning." When it became obsolete, and the old phrase "ords and ends" still held its ground, the obsolete word was at last confounded with the nearest known word that resembled it. That is a

That am come to choose many for
My brethren upon earth
That cheerfully shall persevere
And do my Father's will,
So that he shall hold all of them
For children of His own
And give them to abide with me
Heirs of the heavenly realm,
That am the only son of Him
All one with him in kind,—
The man who wholly shall refuse
To trust this and believe,
That man is now condemned and set
To suffer pain of hell,
Unless he can escape therefrom
Before he come to die,
Believing that I am true God,
True Saviour on earth.

And that he there to Nicodeme
Yet spake thus of himself:
That is the doom, that light and gleam
Is come upon the earth,
And men have no love for the light,
But love the darkness more,
Because that their own deed is all
Evil and all unclean;—
That was as if he had said thus
To him with other words:
All that that any man shall be
Condemned to bear in hell,
All that shall be for that he shall
Neglect, scorn, and refuse
To come unto the Christendom
And to the right belief,
To know me and to follow me,
And in me to believe
That am true light of truth and right
And of the right belief.
And, therefore, shall all those who are
Known by the name of men
Because they follow their own flesh
In all its foul desires,

---

not unusual process, to which we owe such phrases as "under the rose," "set the Thames on fire," etc.

And wholly put away and scorn
To do the Spirit's will;
And hate all that is dear to God
And love all evil ways,
Are ever lying deep in sin
In many kinds of ways
That are all openly enough
By darkness signified,
Because that sins will ever draw
Towards the gloom of hell,
Away from heaven's light and gleam,
The souls that follow them,—
Even as he that evil doth
Aye flies from light of day,
For him is loth that man him see
Employed in his foul deeds,—
Therefore, shall all that wicked flock
Be sentenced to hell pain,
Because that all their life on earth
With darkness is beset
In all the evil that man doth
Through heathendom and wrong.

Before that our Lord Christ was come
To be a man on earth,
This middle world was wholly filled
With gloomy shades of sin,
Because that Christ, the world's true light,
Was then not yet come down
With his rebuke for all mankind
Of heathendom and wrong,
And with his showing what was good
And what was evil deed,
And how a man might please his God
And earn the bliss of heaven,
And stand against the evil one,
And turn himself from hell.
And after our Lord Christ was come
To be a man on earth,
Thereafter was this middle earth
Filled full of heaven's light,
Because that our Lord Christ himself
And his disciples too,
Both what was right and what was wrong
Made known in all the lands,
And how a man might please his God
And earn the bliss of heaven.

And many peoples haughtily
  Withstood and still denied,
And turned them from the light of heaven
  And from the heavenly lore,
Because they rather chose to be
  In darkness that they loved,
To follow lusts of their own flesh
  In every kind of sin,
Because they rather hated light
  That brought rebuke of sin.
And other peoples well received
  The gift of heavenly lore,
And turned them to the Christendom
  And to the right belief;
That is that very light and gleam
  That leadeth man to heaven;
And it received full inwardly
  By shrift and penitence,
Accusing all their own misdeeds
  And punishing themselves,
That they so long in heathendom
  Had angered the true Lord.
And so they came into the light,
  Into the right belief
In Jesus Christ our Saviour,
  Whose name is Faithfulness:
For all that's ever true and right
  And good, and pleases God,
Salvation for His handiwork,
  All comes by grace of Christ.
And so they come into the light
  To shew and to make known
That their deeds have been done aright
  By pattern of our Lord;
For all together did one thing
  Both Christ and they themselves,—
Christ has rebuked them for their wrong
  By teaching righteousness,
And they also rebuke their wrong
  By shrift and penitence,—
So all together did one thing
  Both Christ and they themselves.
And so through that was plainly seen
  That any good they did
Was all in God and all through God,
  Effected by His help.
And God Almighty grant us here
  To please Christ while we live,

All pure in thought and pure in word,
Pure mannered, pure in deed,
So that we may be worthy found
To win the grace of Christ. Amen.

Ormin addressed himself to the low-born as well as the higher classes of the laity. He may have belonged to Peterborough, and Oliphant says his work is the most thoroughly Danish poem ever written in England that has come down to us, abounding in Scandinavian words and forms, and containing only four or five French words. There are a few words also from Ecclesiastical Latin, but case-endings had nearly ceased, and the forms and arrangement of the words approach more nearly to the English of our time. Mr. Baber says that he sometimes violates Scripture facts. For his paraphrase he drew upon Bede, Gregory, and perhaps Josephus and Isidore; but Ten Brink has pointed out that there seems to have been little knowledge in his cloister of the writers of the new era—Anselm, Abelard, or Bernard.

All we have left of the *Ormulum* is a single folio volume in the Junian Collection at the Bodleian Library, and the first to publish it was Dr. R. M. White, formerly Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford. In the Preface to this work, which is dated 1852, Dr. White reviews the course of Anglo-Saxon study, and pays a tribute to Francis Junius, to whose collection the *Ormulum* belongs. He had an unusually protracted life, and his hardy constitution, cheerful temper, and methodical mind fitted him for the arduous task of the glossarist. He left his MSS. and books to the Bodleian Library, and they are now of immense value.

In 1878 the Rev. R. Holt, M.A., edited the *Ormulum* in two volumes. This is simply a reproduction of Dr. White's work, with his valuable Preface. The text, however, is carefully corrected by collation with the MS. in the Bodleian, the notes are revised and added to, and the glossary is verified and corrected.

Mr. Thorpe says that for smoothness of rhythm the *Ormulum* may vie with many modern productions, and

that the author seems to have been a critic in his mother tongue. Mr. H. Sweet, M.A., however, does not like it at all. In giving extracts from it, he says that it has no literary merit, and that the author was in fact a spelling reformer and philologist who mistook his vocation. "The old English picturesqueness and power disappears entirely from his verse, together with the traditional alliteration, and the only compensation is a dry, practical directness of style and metre which is anything but poetical." He calls it the East Midland dialect, and dates it about 1200. It is the earliest printed English work which has come down to us that exhibits the uniform employment of the termination *n* or *en*, as the inflection of the plural number, present tense, indicative mood. Perhaps those who have read through the Homily we have given as a sample will be disposed to agree with Mr. Sweet that it is difficult to see where the poetry comes in. The author's intention was good, however, as Dr. Angus says of Hervey's *Meditations amongst the Tombs*, and it was possibly written after the Decree of the Council of Toulouse, strictly prohibiting the laity from possessing a copy of the Scriptures, except the Psalter, and such portions as are contained in the offices of the Church, any translation being equally forbidden. This might have suggested to Walter the labour he imposed on his brother. He was perhaps of the mind of the writer quoted by Willet, who exclaimed, "What profiteth it a man to have meat, and not to eat it; apparel, and not to wear it? So what good doth it to have Scriptures and not to read them!"

Whatever opinions there may be about it, however, at least Ormin was very particular about his work himself. There was provision that whoever recited any part of it for the instruction of the people should, as far as he could contrive, not make a dead language of its English, or take the pleasantness out of his rhythm by pronouncing it amiss. And as for the copyists, he says to them, "Whoso shall will to write this book again another time, I bid him that he write it rightly, so as this book teacheth him

entirely as it is upon this first pattern, with all such rhyme as is here set, with just as many words, and that he look well that he write a letter twice where it upon this book is written in that wise."

He speaks of rhyme, but there is very little in it, the verse imitating a mediæval Latin rhythm in verses of fifteen syllables, in two sections, the metrical point being placed at the end of the eighth syllable, or fourth foot, and the fifteenth syllable unaccented, almost always a syllable of inflection. The duplication also, which he insists on to his copyists, is a special characteristic of the written English of the *Ormulum*. He always doubled the consonant after a short vowel in the same word, and avoided doubling it after a long vowel.

In fact, he was a purist in orthography, and may be called the first of English phoneticians. He has three sounds of *g*, the last being *dzh*, as discovered recently by Professor A. S. Napier.* Nobody appears to have copied his work, though he was so particular about it, or perhaps because of this, and there is no evidence of its having any literary importance at the time. It is a most interesting relic to-day, however, being the first noteworthy piece of Anglian or Northern literature after the Conquest. In this respect it is to be put side by side with Layamon's *Brut*, which about the same time marked the reawakening of poetry in the Southern territory.

In appearance the *Ormulum* is something like a rough day-book or ledger, very different from the magnificent Vernon MS. in the same library, one of the handsomest books of the world. Just as the parchment shapes itself, it is written upon, so that though the book is about 22 inches long and 8 wide, some of the leaves diminish in width to 5 inches and less. One leaf is only 8′ by 6′ and another 4′ by 3′; in fact, little bits are put in all the way through, giving the MS. an odd and mean appearance. One whole page is crossed out, line by line, till close to the bottom. It is a minuscule also, that is a small letter, as much being crowded into a page as possible. So have

* *Academy*, March 1890. Leslie Stephen.

our MSS. come down to us, some the most splendid books that the world holds, in spite of all modern art and taste, like the Vernon and Durham Books; others in very homely guise, and with the marks of poverty stamped plainly upon them.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SOWLEHELE—RICHARD ROLLE, THE HAMPOLE ANCHORITE

"About the Anglo-Saxon tongue there was the strength of iron, with the sparkling and the beauty of burnished steel, which made it withstand with success the attacks that the Norman William and his courtiers directed against it, as they tried in vain to thrust their French into the mouths of the English people. If the sword of the Normans vanquished the Anglo-Saxons, the Anglo-Saxon tongue in its turn overthrew the French of the Normans."—DOLMAN.

THIS extract from Dolman is quoted by Thorpe, in his *Analecta Anglo-Saxonica*, and it is not wonderful that it should be so, seeing that only about sixty thousand Normans came to dwell amongst two millions of Saxons. They were conquerors, however, and despisers of most things Saxon. Even the British saints were scorned, and it was a burning shame that at St. Albans, where the first martyr perished, the abbot should throw down the tombs of his predecessors.

The Normans were the aristocrats also, and "uplandish people who would be gentlemen" began to learn Norman-French.* A strong fusion of the races soon began to take place, however. Henry I. was taught English; in Magna Charta no mention is made of different races; and by the thirteenth century English was the mother tongue of the aristocracy. So that we do not by any means pass into a new language in examining these fragments of Scripture belonging to the Norman period. There are not more than sixty foreign words in the *Ormulum*,

* Eadie.

and in the thirteenth century not more than one word in ten was either of Latin or Romance origin.*

The *Sowlehele*, or *Salus Animæ*, is a metrical summary of the leading events of Bible history. It probably belongs to the thirteenth century, and is in the Bodleian Library, where it is known as the Vernon MS.

It is a large volume, but cannot be classed amongst translations, being a paraphrase, accompanied by a very miscellaneous collection of religious poetry. The author is unknown, and the date uncertain, but it was presented to the Bodleian soon after the termination of the Civil War, by Edward Vernon, Esq., of Trinity College, Oxford.

The subjoined extract is from Warton, *History of English Poetry*, i. 19, London 1774 :—

"Our ladi and hire suster stoden under the roode,
And saint John and Marie Magdaleyn with wel sori moode;
Vr ladi bi heold hire swete son i brought in gret pyne,
For monnes gultes nouthen her and nothing for myne.
Marie weop wel sore and bitter teres leet,
The teres fullen uppon the ston doun at hire feet.
Alas, my son, for serwe wel off seide heo
Nabbe iche bote the one that hongust on the treo;
So ful icham of serwe, as any wommen may beo,
That ischal my deore childe in all this pyne iseo;
How schal I sone deore, how hast I yougt liven withouten the,
Nusti nevere of serwe nougt sone, what seyst you me?
Then spake Jhesus wordus gode to his modur dere,
There he heng uppon the roode here I the take a fere,
That trewliche schal serve ye, thin own cosin Jon,
The while that you alyve beo among all thi fon;
Ich the hote John, he seide, you wite hire both day and niht
That the Gywes hire fon ne don hire none unriht." †

"This sumptuous volume," says Dr. Watson, "was undoubtedly chained in the cloister or church of some

* Layamon's *Brut*, for instance, which belongs to this period, has 5700 lines, but only about 100 words are foreign. Saxon is still, in the main, the language of to-day. If word-books contain 38,000 words, far the most are Saxon, though some are out of date :—tungel-witigan (star knowers, the magi), stoopcild (stepchild or orphan), sunderhalgan (separate, holy, the Pharisees !), woeter seocman (one having the dropsy), geriht-wisian (to justify).

† *English Versions*, Mombert.

monastery." It is sumptuous indeed, and is described in Bernard's Catalogue, 1697, as a vast massy MS., at once the largest and one of the most valuable relics of the kind that has been preserved. There are splendid illuminations, and large margins throughout, a perfect contrast to the *Ormulum*.

The book is chiefly a volume of Early English poetry, and there is a rendering of many of the principal parts of the Old and New Testament into verse. Warton thinks this was made before the year 1200, and several of them, including the story of Lazarus and other Gospel stories, have been copied for the Early English Text Society, with the Paternoster, Ten Commandments, and Creed. Later on, comes some of the early ecclesiastic history of the island. We read of St. Cuthbert, St. Oswald, St. Chadde, and others, that they were "ibore her in Engelonde," and of St. Aldhelm that he was a confessor and a man of good life. The first part contains eight leaves, not foliated with the remainder. Those who are privileged to consult it must sit near at hand, for they will find it impossible to carry it more than a few yards, unless they have unusual strength. But, heavy as it is, doubtless such a volume is worth its weight in gold, and far more.

Another version of the history contained in Genesis and Exodus is preserved in the library of Corpus Christi, Cambridge. It is an Early English song in reality, and was edited for the Early English Text Society by the Rev. R. Morris, LL.D., in 1865. Nothing is known of the author, except that he lived in the southern part of East Anglia shortly before A.D. 1300. He introduces his subject by telling his readers that they ought to love a rhyming story which teaches the layman how to love and serve God, and live peaceably and amicably with his fellow-Christians. He then invokes the Deity, and there follows the Bible narrative, here and there varied by the introduction of those sacred legends so common in the mediæval ages. A few portions of Numbers and Deuteronomy are also included. The Corpus MS. is a small volume,

8′ by 4½′, bound in vellum, written on parchment, clearly and regularly. The illuminated letters are chiefly vermilion, and if the writer of the *Ormulum* belonged to Lincoln, this one may have hailed from Suffolk.

A manuscript of the Psalter, said to belong to the thirteenth century, is in the University Library at Cambridge. It is a copy, on paper, and there is a note at the end saying that it cost the owner £10, 12s. 4d. for transcribing. Here is a sample, slightly modernised :—

"Psalm 34. Which is that man that will that life that ever shall last, and loveth to see good days ? Defend thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak not treachery. Turn thee from evil and do good ; seek peace and follow it. The eyes of the Lord be upon the rightful, and his ears to hear their prayers."

"Psalm 103. He made far from us our wickedness as the East departeth from the West. As the father has mercy on his childer, our Lord is merciable of him that dreds Him."

Here is the 1st Psalm, according to another Psalter of this period, now preserved in the British Museum :—

"1. Beonuré barun chi ne alat el cunseil des feluns, et en la veie des pecheurs re stout, et en la chaere de pestilence ne sist.

"2. Mais en la lei de nostre seignor la volunted, e en la sue lei purpense rat par jurn e par nuit.

"3. E iert ensement cume le fust qued et de juste les decurs des ewes, ki dunrat sun froit en son tens.

"4. E sa fuille ne decurrat, e tutes les coses que il unques ferad serunt fait prospres.

"5. Nient eissi li felun, nient eissi, mais ensement cume la puldre que li ventz getet de la face de terre.

"6. En pur ico ne sur dent li felun en juise, ne li pecheor el conseil des dreituriers.

"7. Kar nostre sire cunuist la veie des justes e l'eire des feluns perirat."

A translation of the four Books of Kings in Anglo-Norman has also been printed in Paris, under the editorial care of M. Le Roux de Lincy, from a MS. preserved there but written in England in the first half of the twelfth century. Here is a sample from 1 Sam. viii., *the manner of the king*: "Samuel issi le fist. Revint al popli, et si lur dit: Rei m'avez deman ded. Deus l'ad oi, si lad granted; mais sur vus tele seignurie aura que voz fiz a sun plaisir prendra; des uns en frad chevalers, des altres curliens devant sun charrei."

Towards the close of the same century a metrical version of the Psalms was made by an author now unknown, of which six copies are still extant.

To this century belongs Grosseteste, the famous Bishop of Lincoln, whose friendship to vernacular translations is well known. "It is the will of God," said he, "that the Holy Scriptures should be translated by many translators, so that what is obscurely expressed by one may be more perspicuously rendered by another."

He strenuously resisted the Pope, who wanted to make provision for three hundred children of the citizens of Rome in the bestowment of English benefices. Such a purely money-getting system had Popery already become, without faith or conscience! The nobles sided with Grosseteste, or Grouthead, as he is variously called, and at last the Pope's Legate was told that, if he did not leave the kingdom in three days, he should be cut in pieces. Grosseteste often speaks beautifully of the Scriptures and their power. Once, in a charge to the rectors of Oxford, he says:—

"Therefore the foundation-stones of the building of which you are the architects are the books of the prophets, amongst whom Moses the Lawgiver is rightly to be numbered; the books also of the Apostles and Evangelists.

"The time especially proper for laying and arranging the aforesaid stones in the foundation is the morning hour in which ye ordinarily read: it is becoming therefore that all your readings, especially at such a time, should be from the New or Old Testament, lest, if it should be

otherwise done, amongst the foundation stones, or *for* foundation stones, such should be placed which are not so. Therefore we . . . ask that all your readings at the morning hour of reading be from the New or Old Testament, that you may be like fathers of families, or rather that you be fathers of families yourselves, bringing out of your treasures things new and old." *

During this century also lived Roger Bacon (1214–94), who did not flourish, being so far before his age. He was thought heretical, and spent twelve of his last years in prison in consequence ; and it is only in modern times that he has ceased to be regarded as a sorcerer. His heresies and sorceries, however, consisted in founding theology upon the Scriptures alone, and devoting himself to experimental science. He doubted the scholastic reasonings of Anselm, and was dissatisfied with the contradictory opinions brought together in Peter Lombard's text-book. His own chief work was called "the roots of wisdom," but he formed no school, though one of the most profound and original thinkers of any age. His words are: "All wisdom as to its principle and source is contained in the Scriptures, of which canon-law and philosophy are the development." He attributed the prevailing evils of his time to ignorance of the Scriptures, and exhorted the laity to the diligent reading of the Bible in the original languages.

Green says that, however disappointed in his lifetime, and he was grievously both by the Pope and the University, the year in which he published his great work was the annus mirabilis of English science, and he quotes Whewell, who says that this work was at once the Encyclopædia and the Novum Organum of the thirteenth century.

"We ought," he exclaims, "to be much more instructed in the knowledge of Christ from our youth than we are; for the law of God ought to be read to boys, that they might ever accustom themselves to the truth of the Faith,

* *Robert Grosseteste Epistolæ.* Published under the direction of the Master of Rolls.

and especially the plainer books, and the more moral parts of either Testament. For a man should first be instructed in those things which belong to the safety of his soul, that ever he may be accustomed to advance to better things; but they are not thus instructed; but in the fables and follies of Ovid, and of the other poets where all errors in faith and manners are put forth." He laments that, for seventy years before his time, scarcely anyone, with the exception of Grouthead, had translated the Scriptures, adding, "Wonderful is the neglect of the Church!" But he speaks of one who had thus laboured, and who had spent almost forty years in literal correction, and in expounding the literal sense.*

A few other versions of the Psalms, with amendments and revisions, which belong to the same period, and follow the Gallican version, are also to be found in the British Museum and Bodleian Libraries. The Gallican Psalter is that version corrected by St. Jerome in accordance with the Greek text of Origen's *Hexapla*. It was so called because generally adopted in Gaul about the sixth century.

About 1320 a faithful and literal translation of the Psalter, with the Latin verse by verse beside it, was made by William de Scorham, vicar of Chart Sutton, near Sevenoaks. It contains also the Canticles, with the Athanasian Creed, and was probably intended for divine service. Here is the 23rd Psalm, as given by Dr. Moulton:—

Psalm XXII. (XXIII.), Shoreham's Version.

"1. Our Lord gouerneth me, and nothyng shal defailen to me; in the stede of pasture he sett me ther.
2. He norissed me vp water of fyllynge; he turned my soule fram the fende.
3. He lad me vp the bistiges of rigtfulnes; for his name.
4. For gif that ich haue gon amiddes of the shadowe of deth; Y shal nougt douten iuels, for thou art wyth me.
5. Thy discipline and thyn amendyng; conforted me.
6. Thou madest radi grace in my sight; ogayns hem that trublen me.

* *Historical Associations of the English Bible*, J. W. Morris, F.L.S.

7. Thou makest fatt myn heued wyth mercy; and my drynke makand drunken ys ful clere.
8. And thy merci shal folwen me; alle daies of mi lif.
9. And that ich wonne in the hous of our Lord; in lengthe of daies." *

It is probably a revision of this work by John Hyde which is preserved in Trinity College, Dublin.

Shoreham became widely known in more modern times as the Vicarage of Vincent Perronet. The Rev. John Wesley constantly visited and preached here, and Mr. Perronet has been called the Archbishop of the Methodists.

The name of *Richard Rolle* looms somewhat large, and belongs to about the same period (died 1349). He was called the Hermit of Hampole, near Doncaster, and translated the Psalter, with a Commentary, so that both the north and the south of England had men doing the same work at the same time, though probably quite unknown to one another.

Rolle's personal history is a remarkable one, and has been lately given by two writers in a somewhat complete form.† Previously to this, one authority has simply copied another in the same haphazard mistakes, without much inquiry, Pitz, Leland, Tanner, Wharton, and Cave repeating the same things, some of them correct, and some mere conjecture. Rolle's true Life, however, though with legendary additions, is found in the *Officium et Legenda de Vita Ricardi Rolle*, which exists in the library of Lincoln Cathedral, being probably the only copy remaining of this curious document. The plan of this service is to recite a short piece of the saint's history and then to break off into hymns and psalms, thus giving the congregation an opportunity of expressing the devout feelings supposed to be stirred up by the hearing of the virtues of the hermit. The service was probably drawn up under

* *Wycliffite Versions*, Forshall and Madden.

† *The Psalter and Canticles*, with a Translation and Exposition in English by R. Rolle, of Hampole. Edited from MSS. by the Rev. H. R. Bramley, M.A. Clarendon Press, 1884. See also the Early English Text Society's edition of Rolle, edited by the Rev. George G. Perry, M.A. 1866.

the direction of the nuns of Hampole, in anticipation of Rolle's canonisation, and from it we learn that his father was the intimate friend of John de Dalton, the gentleman who became his patron. Richard was born at Thornton, near Pickering, and sent to Oxford by the Archdeacon of Durham. At nineteen, however, fearing to become entangled in the snares of sin, he left Oxford, and returned to his father's house. Soon afterwards he changed his habit and became a hermit, much to the amazement of the family, who spread the report that he was mad. He had a sister, whom he dearly loved. One day he begged of her two of her kirtles, a white one and a grey one, which at his request she carried, with the hood which their father wore in wet weather, to a neighbouring wood. Her brother, having cut off the buttons of the white frock and the sleeves of the grey one, stripped off his clothes and put on the white frock next his skin, and the grey one over it, thrusting his arms, with the white sleeves, which he had sewed up as well as he could, through the holes that were left in the grey frock; and thus, with his father's hood, completed, so far as he was able, the semblance of a hermit. With threatening gestures, he then ran away from home, and is next heard of at a church, possibly Topcliffe, near Thirsk, the parish of which includes a township of the name of Dalton. Here he took up his place in the seat usually occupied by the wife of John Dalton, from which her servants would have turned him away, but she would not allow it. Next Sunday morning he put on a surplice, and sang in the choir. After the Gospel, having obtained leave, he went into the pulpit, and so moved the hearts and consciences of the hearers that they declared they had never heard such a sermon. By this time he had been recognised by the young Daltons, who had seen him at Oxford, and he was asked to dinner. After he had made several attempts to escape by leaving the table before the meal was concluded and hiding himself in an outhouse, John de Dalton took him aside, and having convinced himself of the purity of his intentions, provided

him with a proper habit and suitable accommodation. Perhaps he imitated somewhat the dress of the Augustinian Friars, and so has been thought to belong to them, but his rule of life was unsanctioned by external authority.

The record of his early travels shows that few could so suitably have for their motto, *All for Jesus*. He turned from earthly love, and laboured to subdue the flesh, praying with sobs and sighs, living in a little cottage, sleeping on a board, and attaining to the "sound and mirth of Heaven." His conversion was something like Wesley's, and is described in a similar way. He says (*De Incendio Amoris*) that it was about three years from the alteration in his life to the time when he saw the opening of the Heavenly Door. "I was sitting in a certain chapel, and being much delighted with the sweetness of prayer or meditation, suddenly I felt in me a strange and pleasant heat." After this, he was filled with celestial music.

For some good reason, he left the part of the North Riding where he had lived, and went to Richmondshire, where he was useful in turning many to righteousness. He was an irregular sort of teacher, and in a great measure self-instructed, making us wonder at his learning and power, though he was at Oxford some little time. He was not one of those eremites satirised by the author of *Piers Plowman*, who "clothed them in copes to be knowe fro othire, and made themselves eremites thare ease to have," and his biographer is specially anxious that he should not be confounded with the crowd of lazy and debauched hermits who went about collecting alms from the people.

We do not know when he left Richmondshire and went to Hampole, near Doncaster, with which the rest of his life is connected.

There was a Cistercian nunnery here, founded by William de Clairefai in 1170, for fourteen nuns, and he lived somewhere near it. He was summoned away from Richmondshire by a devout recluse at Anderby (? Ainderby Steeple, near Northallerton), Dame Margaret, whom he had been

accustomed to instruct in the love of God, and to whom he had a strong attachment. She was suffering from a severe seizure, in which she had lost her speech for thirteen days. During his visit, she was suddenly relieved, and after the removal of a second violent attack, he promised her she should never be so disturbed again whilst he lived. Some years afterwards the disorder returned, though without the loss of speech. She inferred that he was dead, which was found to be true; she then removed to Hampole, where she was interred in the nuns' church, having suffered no further relapse.

So great became Rolle's absorption in his studies that his friends were able to take away the ragged dress which he wore, and put on him a more decent garment without attracting his attention! Perhaps if the operation had been reversed, it would have been attracted.

He composed treatises on such subjects as "The Religious Claims of the Mixed Life," "The Union of God with the Soul of Man," "Explanation of the Ten Commandments," "The Lessons to be learnt from the Bee," "The Virtues of the Name of Jesus," "The Prick of Conscience," and they are genuine specimens of the old Northern dialect, perhaps the finest form of the ancient English tongue—"that language of the northern lede, that can nan other Inglis rede."* The "Prick of Conscience" contains nearly 10,000 lines, and Professor Morley gives the following extract from it, showing that the hermit life had not quite destroyed his love of the quaint:—

"For unnethes es a child born fully
That it ne bygynnes to youle and cry;
And by that cry men knaw than
Whether it be man or weman.
For when it es born it cryes swa:
If it be a man it says, 'A, a!'
That the first letter es of the nam
Of our forme-fader Adam.

* Hygden calls it "soe scharp, slittyng and frotyng and unschape that we southerne men may that language unnethe understonde," but it seems to have had more influence on the structure of our language than any of the more Southern forms.

And if the child a woman be,
When it is born it says, 'E, e!'
E es the first letter and the hede
Of the name of Eve that bygan our dede.
Tharfor a clerk made on this manere
This vers of metre that es wroten here:
Dicentes E vel A quotquot nascuntur ab Eva.
'Alle thas,' he says, 'that comes of Eve
(That es all men that here byhoves leve),
When thai er born what-swa thai be
Thai say outher A, a! or E, e!'" *

It was said of him that his life was devotion and his amusement study, and in his Expositions he is careful to say that he follows the "holy Doctors." Like most of the early time, he indulged in paraphrasing, and he also put the seven penitential Psalms, the Lord's Prayer, and some portions of Job, into verse.

His Psalter is in the Bodleian Library, and prefixed to it are some verses to the effect that it was begun at the request of Dame Margaret Kirkby, and that the autograph copy was still at Hampole, attached by chains to the author's tomb. He describes the Psalter as comprehending the Old and New Testaments, and teaching the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation.

Here is the 23rd Psalm as given by Mr. Baber:—

"Our Lord gouerneth me, and nothyng to me shal wante; sted of pasture thar he me sette. In the water of the hetyng forth he me broughte; my soul he turnyde.
He ladde me on the stretis of rygtwisnesse; for his name.
For win gif I hadde goo in myddel of the shadewe of deeth: I shal not dreede yueles, for thou art with me.
Thy geerde and thy staf; they have comfortid me. Thou hast greythid in my sgyt a bord: agens hem that angryn me.
Thou fattide myn head in oyle; and my chalys drunkenyng what is cleer.
And thi mercy shal folewe me; in alle the dayes of my lyf.
And that I wone in the house of oure lord in the lengthe of dayes."

* *Unnethes*, scarcely. First-English, "eathe," easily; "uneathe," uneasily. *Than* (First-English, "thanne"), then. *Swa*, so, thus, the First-English form of the word. *Byhoves leve*, have to live. First-English, "behofian," to behove, be fit, have need of. In impersonal form, the meaning is fit or necessary.

In his prologue he says that he seeks no strange English, but that which is "lightest and commonest."

Rolle was in the habit of writing the same matter both in Latin and in English. There is an English Exposition of the Psalms, of which there is also a Latin version, and in the Preface to this it is said :—

"But for the Psalms ben full darke in many a place
Who wol take hede
And the sentence is full merke *—who so wol rede
It needeth exposicyon written well with cunning honde
To strive toward devocyon and hit the better understonde
Therefore a worthy man called Richard Hampole
Whom the Lord that all can lered lelely † on his scole
Glossed the sauter that sues here in English tong sykerly ‡
At a worthy recluse prayer called Dame Marget Kirkby." §

In foreign collections of mediæval writers, Rolle's name figures as the writer of Latin treatises, under the disguise of Pampolitanus. He has two stories about shrift, which contain a clear testimony against the *opus operatum* view of religion generally attributed to mediæval writers. And he strongly contends for the paramount importance of the duty of the active over the contemplative life, in the case of those whose position gives them influence.

The fame of our translator's sanctity became a great source of profit and honour to the Hampole nuns. Crowds flocked to pray at the tomb of the saint, so that the nuns were careful to preserve their patron's works, which evil men of Lollardry had, as they alleged, in many cases perverted to their own base purposes, "feigning to lewd souls that their noxious compositions were the works of Richard Hampole, and thus propping up their mischievous heresies by the support of his great and honoured name." Which, being interpreted, probably means that our translator had something of the reformer in him, like his illustrious successor, whose work we are now approaching.

* Difficult. † Truly, heartily. ‡ Securely.
§ MS. in Bodleian. Laud, 286.

Rolle was born, as we have seen, at Thornton, in Yorkshire, and the writer of the manuscript still preserved was also named Thornton, becoming Archdeacon of Bedford in the fifteenth century. He was a near neighbour, and it was during his lifetime that the priory of Hampole became the favoured resort of pilgrims, Rolle's works being kept in "cheyn bondes," to preserve them from being tampered with. Warton, in his *History of Poetry*, does not think they were worth it, and in giving some extracts exclaims, "I prophesy that I am their last transcriber." They illustrate, however, the teaching given to the people in the fourteenth century, and are genuine specimens of the old Northern dialect, perhaps the finest form of the ancient English tongue.

Here is the 2nd Psalm :—"Whi gnastide the folke? and the puple thoughte ydil thoughtis? The prophete snybbyng hem that shulde turmente Crist seith whi? as hoo seith, what enchesun hadde thei? sotheli none but yuel wille for he contrariede her wele lywing in werk and word, the folke thei were tha knyghtis of rome, that crucified Crist, thei gnastide aghen hym as bestis wode without resoun; and the puple that was the juwes, thoughte in ydel that is, in vain was ther thoughte whon thei wend have holde Crist everi deed that thei myghte not doo for thi in vayne thei travelide as eche man doth that thoruh—pryde and ypocrisye weneth to hude Cristis lawful ordenaunce."

Some of the wildest extravagances of mysticism are also found in his writings, and such views as we might perhaps expect from anyone leading a hermit life. For instance, he thought that the death of even the righteous would be accompanied by such fearful terrors, the manifestation and sight of devils, and the consciousness of their struggles for the departing spirit, that the mind quails at the contemplation. Some of his contemporaries, however, arrived at a Manichæan hatred of everything material. As for Purgatory, the doctrine is full fledged in his writings. We are told what it is, where it is, what pains are there, what souls go thither, and for what sin,

and what may help to "slake their pain." Hell is in the middle of the earth, like the hollow in the yolk of an egg.

There are some pretty lines about the hermits :—

"Just thus in woods and solitary caves the ancient hermits lived, but they lived happy, and in their quiet contemplations found more real comforts than societies of men could yield, than cities could afford, or all the lustres that a court could give."

Perhaps the writer never tried it; the poet's eye has an imagination that "bodies forth." However, Rolle's translation of the Psalter appears to have been largely used, and several times revised, until the glories of Hampole all faded away in Henry VIII.'s time, Isabella Arthington being the last prioress, and the gross annual value of the priory being £83 at its dissolution. Rolle wrote annotations on the Hymns of the Old Testament, Job, the Song of Solomon, the Lamentations, the Revelation, the Lord's Prayer, and the Athanasian and Apostles' Creeds, and we may fitly close our sketch of him by an extract on the Holy Scriptures from his tract, *De Emendatione Peccatoris*.

He says: "If you desire to attain to the love of God, and to be influenced with the desire of heavenly joys, and to be brought to the contempt of earthly things, be not negligent in reading or meditating on the Holy Scriptures, and especially those parts of them which inculcate morality, and teach us to beware of the snares of the devil; where they speak of the love of God, and of a contemplative life; but leave the more difficult passages to disputants and ingenious men, who have been long exercised in sacred doctrines.

"This method assists us greatly to improve in what is good. In these we ascertain our failings and our improvements; in what things we have offended, and in what we have not; what we should avoid, and what we should practise. They discover most skilfully the machinations of our enemies; they inflame us to love, and move us to tears; and thus prepare for us a delicious feast, if we delight in them as in all riches.

"But let us not be urged to a knowledge of the Scriptures by any desire of the honour or favour of men, but only by a design of pleasing God, that we may know how to love Him, and that we may teach our neighbour the same, and not that we may be considered as learned by the people. Nay, we ought rather to conceal our learning than to exhibit it to our own praise, as says the Psalmist: 'Thy word have I hid in my heart' (that is, from vain exhibition) 'that I might not sin against Thee.' Therefore let the cause of our speaking be the glory of God and the edification of our neighbour, that we may fulfil that Scripture, 'His praise shall be continually in my mouth,' which is done when we do not seek our own praise, nor speak contrary to His glory." *

Dr. Edgar says that the manuscript in the possession of Dr. Adam Clarke, and to which he refers in his Commentary, must have been either a copy of Rolle's translation, or a very slight amendment of it.† The learned Wesleyan commentator frequently praises it, and says that the author was well acquainted with that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ which brings peace to the troubled heart. So opposite a critic as Dr. Littledale does the same, affirming that it often comes very little short of Dionysius the Carthusian in beauty and depth. And the English martyrology published under Jesuit auspices, in a second edition in 1640, says that he reposed in our Lord, full of sanctity of life, and venerable old age. There let us leave him, unharmed by the slighting remarks of Waterland, Lewis, and Warton. A perpetual fountain of water gushes out close to the school now found on the site of his cell, an emblem of his doctrine. And the school itself is used every Sunday by three different bodies of Christian people, an emblem of its general diffusion, and of the way it unites those who otherwise differ.

* Townley. *Biblical Literature.*
† *Bibles of England,* A. Edgar, D.D.

CHAPTER XVII

JUST BEFORE WYCLIF—THE FIRST PROHIBITION OF THE BIBLE

"Dulcius ex ipso fonte bibuntur aquæ."

THERE are two other Psalters the date of which is about the same as those we have been considering. There was also an attempt made to translate the whole of the New Testament during this century, a gloss on many of the books being in the library of Benet College. It was probably the work of a priest wishing to instruct his people, and it is the most important contribution to the Bible literature of the time that we possess. The following example we derive from Professor Morley :—

Mark i. :—"And He prechyde sayande a stalworthier thane I schall come after me of whom I am not worthi down fallande or knelande to louse the thwonge of his chawcers."

This is described in the Catalogue as written in the fifteenth century, but Lewis judged it to be before the time of Wyclif. There are the Gospels of Mark and Luke, and all the Epistles of Paul. The comments on the Epistles are much shorter than those on the Gospels, and abound in allegory and mysticism. It is, however, the most extended attempt at an English version before Wyclif.

Here is Romans i. :—"Poule servaunt of Jhu Cst callid apostil departed unto ye evangelye of God, ye whiche before he hadde behizt bi his pphetis in holy wryttis of his sone ye whiche is maad to hym of ye seed of David

aft ye flesch ye whiche is before ordeyned goddes sone in vtue after ye spryte of makyng holy of ye resureccion of ye deade of our Lorde Jhu Crste bi whom we hafe grace and office of Apostil (or power of ye office of apostyl) to all folcs obeische to ye feiy for ye name of hym among ye wheche zee be called of Jhu Crste."

A partial translation of the Gospels in the Northern dialect is also found in a MS. of the British Museum, containing the Gospels for the Sundays of the year, together with an exposition. The following is a sample of it :—

John i. 19 :—"And this is the testimoninge of John whan the Jues of Jerulm sent prestis and dekenes unto Jon Baptist for to aske him what ertou. And he graunted what he was, and agensaide nogt. And he graunted and said, for ynam nogt Crist."

The sermons afford curious specimens of the superstitious and ridiculous legends with which the preachers of the Middle Ages sought to interest their people. Husks are they chiefly, instead of the bread of life.

These scant references then are, at all events, enough to assure us that both our Saxon and Norman forefathers possessed some portions of the Word of God in their own tongue. It is possible that many earnest-minded priests endeavoured to supply their own people with such portions, though they have perished amongst the "inutilia et vetusta." For instance, in the Register of Wills at York, it is recorded that Thomas de Farnylaw, Chancellor of the Church at York, bequeathed at his death, in 1378, a Bible and Concordance to the Church of St. Nicholas at Newcastle, "there to be chained for a common use for the good of his soul." This was before Wyclif, and a Latin book would not be much use.

The Preface to the Bishops' Bible of 1568, defending itself as the manner then was, and with abundant justification, says—

"Our old forefathers, who ruled in this realm, in their times and in divers ages did their diligence to translate whole books of the Scriptures to the erudition of the laity.

"As yet to this day are to be seen divers books translated into the vulgar tongue, some by Kings of the Realm, some by Bishops, some by Abbots, some by other devout godly Fathers. So desirous were they of old time to have the lay-sort edified in godliness by reading in their vulgar tongue, that very many books be yet extant, though for the age of the speech and strangeness of the characters of many of them, almost worn out of knowledge."

John de Trevisa may have translated a large portion of the Scripture, and it is possible that this may be the volume Dr. Adam Clarke possessed, and from which he frequently quoted in his Commentary.*

Nevertheless, it was during this period of the Normans that the first actual prohibition was issued, as far as has been ascertained.

A change in the attitude of the Church towards the Scriptures had indeed been going on for some time. The Council of Nicæa (A.D. 325) had said that no Christian should be without them; and it is indisputable, as we have seen, that in the early centuries they were circulated wherever Christianity found a footing. There followed, however, a gradual growth of error; and we cannot but regard this as the main reason why the Bible came to be looked on suspiciously, and at last locked away from the common gaze. Doubtless as the Latin tongue fell into disuse the Bible suffered with it, and the very language which had been its vehicle became its grave. Fleury puts it that the Roman Church, in order to stop the disputes amongst schismatics, and to prevent heretics from abusing the Sacred Books, adopted the wise and effectual measure of taking away the key of knowledge altogether. And doubtless there were real heretics and schismatics, but no candid student of the second seven centuries will now fail to acknowledge that most of those so called were opponents of such perversions of the Word of God as nevertheless were described as dogma.

* See Townley's *Illustrations of Biblical Literature.* More light may be thrown on this matter, to which Townley gave a good deal of attention, but without result.

It became politic, in fact, to speak of the mystery rather than the simplicity of the Word of God, and to make it a priest's book altogether; and thus, as early as 1199, Innocent III. is found praising the zeal of the Bishop of Metz, who denounced to the Holy See certain people of the diocese, who, having procured a French version of some portions of the Scriptures, held clandestine assemblies at which they read them.*

The first direct prohibition, however, appears to have been at the provincial Council of Toulouse, in 1229; and if we are to trust the writers of their own Church, the state of things amongst the Roman Catholics presented a great departure from the earlier times. Peter of Ailly, about this time Bishop of Cambray, quotes St. Bernard, where he says: "A putrid disease is at this day creeping through the whole body of the Church." Then, having spoken of some excessive abuses of ecclesiastics, he says—

"Behold, in peace is my bitterness most bitter! Bitter first in the slaughter of the martyrs, more bitter afterwards in the conflict with heretics, most bitter now in the manners of those of her own household. There is the voice of one crying, 'I have brought up children and exalted them, but they have despised me. They have despised and dishonoured me by a base life, a base gain, finally by a traffic which walks in darkness.'"

Things were worse now, and it was in vain that the people looked to the clergy for instruction or example. They looked therefore elsewhere, and found them in the Scriptures which had been translated. The perusal of these brought to light the errors and abuses of the Church, and those who opposed these evils got the name of heretics. To put them down, the Inquisition was established; and with a view to their final extermination in the territories of the Council of Toulouse this Synod was assembled, at which the Pope's Legate, with three archbishops and several bishops, enacted forty-five canons for the rooting out of "heresy." It was quite in the spirit of the rest that the fourteenth canon should prohibit the laity from

* *Introduction to the Scriptures*, Dr. Dixon.

having the books of the Old and New Testament even in their possession. The exact words of this famous prohibition are as follows:—

"We also forbid the laity to possess any of the Books of the Old or New Testament, except perhaps someone out of devotion wishes to have the Psalter or the Breviary for the Divine Offices, or the Hours of the Blessed Virgin. But we strictly forbid them having any of these books translated into the Vulgar tongue." *

The Inquisition had only been established in 1208, so that this may be looked upon as its offspring, when it was just of age. The opposition, however, abroad was considerable, as it came to be later on in our own country. It is said of the learned Fulgentio that on one occasion he preached from Matthew xii. 3, "Have ye not read what David did when he was an hungered?" saying that if Christ were to ask the question now, the answer would be, "No, for we are forbidden to read the book." At another time he took for his text, "What is truth?" and told the people that, after much searching, he had found it out, holding up a New Testament. Then, returning it straight to his pocket, he added, "But the book is prohibited." His fate was like most of those who spoke out. He trusted to the Pope's promise of safe conduct, went to Rome, and after being feasted at first, was burnt to ashes on the field of Flora.†

The state of the clergy got worse and worse, with the light shut away. William had separated the lay and the ecclesiastical courts when he took possession, but this only strengthened the clergy, who were thus thrown into the arms of the Pope. As they gained in power they lost in influence, and their nicknames, such as the "Rev. Lack Latin," "Mumble Matins," and "Babbling Sir John," stuck to them. This was the era of the Miracle Plays, which will be described later on, and in which the devil was the popular buffoon. Sunday was a day of rioting, bowls, dice, gambling, and drunkenness. The

* Vindiciæ Laicæ, Dublin, 1825, *Essays on Ecclesiastical History.*
† *Life of Bishop Bedell.*

monasteries were perhaps, in spite of many corruptions, the brightest spots in the picture. They were the almonries, abodes of art, learning, and medicine ; hospitals, schools, and retreats, foundling asylums, and hostelries for wayfaring men. They had been very much of one order, but at the beginning of the thirteenth century the Franciscans and Dominicans came over to England, and soon gathered numerous disciples.

Certainly, the material progress made at this period was very great. Many of the most admired cathedrals were built—such as York, Salisbury, and Winchester. The number of abbeys, priories, and religious houses built in the reign of Henry III. alone amounted to 157. The most solid and beautiful buildings went up side by side with the meanest. Wooden houses, soon erected, and soon burnt down, filled even the cities, whilst stately towers and spires rose slowly above them. Stowe says that, even in 1189, London was nearly all built of wood, covered over with thatch of reeds and straw. Perhaps the chief agents in this rapid development of impressive buildings were the "free masons," a band of ingenious architects and workmen of different countries. They were distributed into classes, every tenth man being a warden overlooking the other nine, whilst a master in chief directed the whole. They offered their services to opulent princes, and were much attached to Henry III. and Edward I.

The "shutting of the Bible" was by no means unopposed. John Thursby, for instance, Archbishop of York, who died 1373, a prelate of great piety and learning, published a manual in English for the instruction of his diocese. This was an Exposition of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and in it he strongly condemns those who were then beginning to withhold the use of the Scriptures from the people.

We are able to look in and hear the preachers of this time. The Early English Text Society has lately published a number of Old English Homilies of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, edited by Mr. R. Morris. He

says (1867) there are huge mounds of Anglo-Saxon Homilies and other MSS. right up to the time of Elizabeth which have never been published. "Yet the glass and the spirit-level are pointed at them, and the stroke of the Editor's pick has been long heard at each end of the tunnel, whilst a train of 70 texts bears witness to the strength of the editorial arm." In this volume we have a fair sample of the preaching of the age, which our readers will thank us for giving specimens of. The "moral ode" is an excellent sermon in verse. It exhorts all men to grow in love as they grow in years. All may purchase Heaven, the poor with his penny and the rich with his pound. At the day of Doom everyone will be his own accuser, wherefore we should repent whilst we have health and strength. It will be too late when death is at the door. In Hell the uncharitable suffer the extremes of hunger and thirst; vowbreakers, traitors, thieves, drunkards, unjust judges, unfaithful stewards, and adulterers are tortured in turn by fire and frost; slanderers, the envious, and proud men are torn and fretted by adders, snakes, and ferrets.

The sum of human duty consists of two loves—love to God and to man. The broad way is our own will, which leads to Hell; we must choose the narrow and green way, along the high cliffs, which leads to Heaven.

The Homily has about 400 long lines, and was written by someone who looked back regretfully on much time wasted or misspent. He says:—

Ich am eldre han ich wes a winter and ek on lore.
Ich welde more han ich dude, my wyt auhte beo more,
Wel longe ich habbe child ibeo, a worde and eke on dede;
Hah ich beo of wynter old, to yong ich am on rede.

I am older than I was, in years and in lore.
I wield more than I did, my wit ought to have been more,
Well long have I been a child, in words and in deeds;
Though I be bold in years, too young am I in wisdom.

He warns others to do good while they may:—

Sende god biforen him man, he hwile he mai, to hevene,
For betre is on almesse biforen, han ben after sevene.

Let a man send some good before him, the while he may, to heaven,
For better is one alms before, than seven after.

The joys of life are too dearly bought with wickedness :—

Swines brede is swithe swete, swa is of wilde dore ;
Alto dore he hit buh, he yefth herere his swore.

Swine's flesh is very sweet, so is that of the wild deer ;
All too dear he buys it, who gives for it his neck.

The joys of Heaven will recompense us for all troubles :—

Crist scal one beon inou alle his durlinges ;
He one is muchele mare and betere, hanne alle ohere hinges.
Christ yyve us leden her swilc lif, and habben her swilc ende,
Hat we moten huder come, wanne we henne wende.

Christ shall alone be enough for all his darlings ;
He alone is much greater and better than all other things.
Christ grant that we lead here such a life, and have here such an end,
That we may thither come when we go hence.*

In another Homily (Bispel), after describing God as our Father, whose earth produces for us corn and cattle, whose sun gives us light and life, whose water produces drink and fishes, and whose fire serves manifold purposes, the homilist asks : " May we, think ye, call Him at all our mother ? Yea, we may. What doth the mother to her child ? First, she cheers and gladdens him by the light, and afterwards puts her arm under him, or covers his head that he may enjoy a quiet sleep. This does the Lord of you all. He rejoices us with the daylight, and sends us to sleep by means of the dark night."

In the first six Homilies, " By Christ," or " so help me, Christ," occur frequently. " Dear men," " good men," " dear brethren and sisters," are constantly found also.

In the Homily for Palm Sunday, the preacher reminds his hearers that, though Jesus might have ridden upon a rich steed, a palfrey or a mule, He did not even ride on the big ass, but upon the little foal, to teach us humility. It is no use singing and praying for the proud and unrepentant sinner, for " who is he that may water the horse that refuses to drink ? " Some confess their sins, to be like other people, or because they would not like to be turned away from the Lord's Table, but they had far better stay away, for there is more harm in going than in abstaining. If they receive the bread, an angel will come and take it

* *Handbook of English Literature*, R. M'William, B.A. 1888.

straight away with him to Heaven, and instead thereof will remain a live coal that will utterly consume them.

For wrong-doing nothing will avail but restitution. If the sinner says, foxlike, that he has spent it all—"This will not do; you must take of your own goods, and make restitution." But the covetous sinner may reply that he does not know where to find those he has wronged—they are either dead or have left the neighbourhood. He must then be exhorted to go to the district where the theft was committed, and expend a sum equivalent in almsgiving, and the repairing of churches and bridges. Then let him look to God, for the priest cannot forgive any man his sins, nor even his own; all he can do is to point to Christ.

In the fifth Homily, we find that female blandishments found place even then, and the preacher exclaims that yellow frogs are fit emblems of those women who wear saffron-coloured clothes, and who powder their faces with "blaunchet" to make themselves fair and seductive. Such as these are the devil's mousetrap, and their outer adornments are the treacherous cheese whereby many a mouse is enticed into the trap. Their cosmetic is the devil's soap, and their mirror the devil's hiding-place.

"Wherefore, good men, for God's sake keep yourselves from the devil's mousetrap, and see that ye be not the spotted adders (slanderers and detractors), nor the black toads (rich misusers of their wealth), nor like the yellow frogs."

In the sermon on the Lord's Prayer, there is a curious division of men into sheepish, neatish (ox-like, labouring well), and goatish. The thirty-third discourse is also curious, treating of the traps set by the devil in the following lairs—play, drink, market, and church.

CHAPTER XVIII

JOHN WYCLIF AND HIS ENTIRE TRANSLATION—I

"He believed that God had committed to the Church the sacred lamp of truth, for the guidance and salvation of men, and he saw that the Church, in its corruption, had become a sepulchre to hide the lamp."
ROMOLA.

"Since secular men should assuredly understand the Faith, it should be taught them in whatever language is best known to them."
J. WYCLIF.

"The Avon to the Severn runs,
The Severn to the sea;
And Wyclife's dust shall spread abroad
Wide as the world shall be."

WYCLIF'S name is spelt in twenty-eight different ways, and perhaps there are as many opinions about his character and work. He had two sorts of followers, those who were disgusted with the Popedom of that day, but cared little for Evangelical religion; and the Puritans of the earlier age, who followed him for his directly spiritual and constructive work. He had many sorts of foes, however, religious and political, in his lifetime and after his death, and it is wonderful that all the harm they were ever permitted to do him was to take up his bones forty years after they had been buried, and throw them over the bridge into the neighbouring stream.

Here are two samples of the way in which he has been spoken of:—

"Even as the morning star being in the midst of a cloud, and as the moon being full in her course, and as the bright beams of the sun, so doth he shine and glister

in the Temple and Church of God." These are the words of Foxe, the martyrologist, accommodating the language used of Simon in the Book of Ecclesiasticus.

"He was the devil's instrument, the church's enemy, the people's confusion, the heretic's idol, the hypocrite's mirror; a sower of hatred, a forger of lies, and a sink of flattery; who at his death, despised like Cain, and stricken by the horrible judgment of God, breathed forth his wicked soul to the dark mansions of the black devil." This is from Walsingham, a Catholic historian, and Fuller, who quotes it, adds that surely he with whose name the epitaph begins and ends was with the maker "clean through the contrivance thereof." But, as Wyclif says himself, in his "Poor Caitiff," "how much the higher the hill is, so much is the wind there the greater." The hill stands, however, in spite of the wind, and Wyclif is permanently honoured as one of England's noblest sons.

All must be looked at in the light of the fact that he translated the entire Bible, with the help of his coadjutors, and sent itinerating preachers about the country to set forth its truths. "Ex uno disce omnes." So the whole Word of God was put into the vernacular long before the printer's art came to multiply it by the million, by one of the greatest men of his or any age. It was the head and front of his offending; it is his crown and glory through all time.

And need enough there was for his work, if superstition will not do in the place of religion; if it is important whom we worship and how. For the Church of Rome in these Middle Ages had gone on multiplying her tricks on the one hand, and her heresies on the other, until the country was in a state difficult for us now to understand. Let us try to understand it, however, or we shall fail to see the great importance of Wyclif's labours.

For one thing, the Church had grown altogether too rich, and was constantly getting richer. Even in John's time the Archbishop of Canterbury endeavoured to outvie his sovereign in magnificence, leading him to say that the proud prelate had too much riches and too little dis-

cretion. Before the statute of Mortmain was passed in 1279, a large proportion of the landed property of the nation was in the hands of the Church of Rome. In the petition of the "Good Parliament," in 1376, the Commons stated that the taxes paid to the Court of Rome for ecclesiastical dignities amounted to five times more than was paid to the king from the whole realm. Favouritism the most gross and absurd was practised in the bestowment of livings, worthy Englishmen being pushed aside for foreigners who were never seen. Innocent IV. at one time commanded Grosseteste, the famous Bishop of Lincoln, to bestow a valuable benefice upon an infant. The bishop tore up the Bull, and wrote to the Pope declaring that the conduct of the see of Rome shook the very foundations of faith and security amongst mankind. He refused to comply, and said that the sins of those who attempted such things rose as high as their offices. "What," cried the Pope, "is not England our possession, and its king our vassal!"

A great deal of money was made by the sale and exhibition of relics, real or supposed. The instruments of our Lord's crucifixion, the spear and cross having been miraculously preserved; the clothes wherein He was wrapped in infancy, the manger in which He was laid, the vessels in which He converted water into wine, the bread which He brake at the Last Supper, His vesture for which the soldiers cast lots—these were all to be seen in one place or another for a consideration, often a heavy one. Portions of the burning bush were miraculously found, the manna which fell in the wilderness, some of Moses' rod, of Samson's honeycomb, of Tobit's fish, of the Virgin's milk!

Another source of gain was the saint-worship which grew up side by side. Almost every church had some wonder-working image or images, some of which were pretended to have been made without hands, and others to have dropped from Heaven, like the Diana of the Ephesians. Sometimes the head of the same saint was shown at the same time in several places, and the dispute

was settled by asserting a miraculous multiplication, the dead man having doubled or trebled himself! This saint and relic worship was far from done away with by the partial change effected under Wyclif. At the time of the Reformation Bishop Shaxton's list of what passed under the name of relics may serve as a sample of other dioceses. "There be set forth and commended unto the ignorant people," he says, "stinking boots, mucky coombs, ragged rochettes, rotten girdles, pyl'd purses, great bullock's horns, locks of hair, and filthy rags, gobbets of wood, under the name of parcels of the holy cross, and such pelfry beyond estimation." * So, as Milton says, "nearly all the inward parts of worship, which issue from the native strength of the soul, ran lavishly to the upper skin, and there hardened into a crust of formality."

Almost everyone had some patron saint, but high above all was the Virgin Mary, about whom the language used is almost incredible. The Saviour is represented as needing to be propitiated, and she, as the advocate who intercedes for sinners and obtains their pardon—not through His merit, but her own. She is represented as the great channel of grace. As Eve had persuaded Adam to our destruction, it was necessary that Mary should prevail over the second Adam for our redemption! She saved the angels, many of whom would have been treated like Lucifer but for her protection; and she saved the world by withholding the arm of her offended Son, when raised in vengeance. Hallam gives us a number of instances of the profanity about the teaching of the Virgin, acknowledging that much of it would have been repudiated by many. But, as he justly says, we are concerned with the general character of religious notions among the people, rather than with the views of a few comparatively learned and reflecting men.

Look also at the language commonly held about the Pope during this period. His supposed infallibility, though a new dogma, is far from being a modern idea. There were those who said that, though the Catholic

* Froude, vol. ii. p. 92.

faith teaches all virtue to be good, and all vice evil, nevertheless if the Pope, through error, should prohibit virtues, the Church would sin in conscience if it believed otherwise. It was disputed in the Schools whether he could not add a new article to the Creed; whether he did not, with Christ, participate in both natures; and whether he were not more merciful than Christ, inasmuch as he delivered souls from the pains of Purgatory, whereas we did not read that this had ever been done by our Saviour.*

Whilst such discussions were going on, the Popes were enjoying themselves. In 1377 the Pope was the Count of Avignon, living there in a mighty palace, golden brown, a fortress of the feudal ages. He lived most luxuriously, his rooms full of money-brokers, weighing and counting out heaps of gold. When remonstrated with, and told that former Popes had not been so luxurious, he replied that they did not half know how to be Popes.†

As for the Schoolmen and their discussions, they were continually leaving the weightier matters of the law for stale, flat, and unprofitable subjects. Here are two samples:—"Does the glorified body of Christ, whilst resident in Heaven, use a sitting or a standing posture?" "Is the body of Christ received at the sacrament dressed or undressed?" ‡

With all this blasphemous and absurd rubbish, the land was in as low a condition morally as we should expect it to be. The monasteries inevitably degenerated. They promised fair, but time tried them, and Chaucer, a contemporary of Wyclif's, is unsparing in his satirical shafts at them. The famous answer ascribed to Richard I. might have suited Richard II. equally well, in whose days Wyclif lived. We are told that Fulke, a good man of that earlier time, said to the king, "You have three daughters, namely, Pride, Luxury, and Avarice, and as long as they shall remain with you, you can never expect to be in favour with God." Richard replied,

* Erasmus, Notes on 1 Tim. i.
† *End of the Middle Ages*, A. M. F. Robinson.
‡ Thomson's *Illustrations*.

after a short pause, "I have already given away those daughters in marriage—Pride to the Templars, Luxury to the Black Monks, and Avarice to the White."

It would be a very partial view of Wyclif's period, however, which did not notice the reforming religious Orders, which came ostensibly to mend matters, and certainly exercised a remarkable influence within and without the Church. The Franciscans established themselves in England in 1216, and the Dominicans immediately afterwards, both having greatly multiplied by Wyclif's time, whilst the Knights' Templars became extinct. Mr. Southey, in his *Book of the Church*, enables us to realise the action of these friars, or cordeliers, or brethren, as they are variously called. Let us enter a village where there is a priest who has amassed a considerable fortune, and acquired very comfortable habits of life. His house is large and well appointed, his grounds are extensive, and his treasures various and uncommon. He hears that a Franciscan is coming along on the way to his retreat, and is likely to pay him a visit, and especially his people. It is not pleasant news, for his brother in the strait, coarse dress believes that a voluntary and absolute poverty is part of the very essence of the Gospel, and prescribes this poverty to all alike, as a sacred obligation. He has a good many other views which, to fairly state to the people, will be almost like preaching a sermon against him. And yet what is he to do? If he could only treat him as a Dissenter, it would not matter so much, but this new Society is under the sanction of his own Church. Innocent III. has solemnly approved of it; it has been confirmed in its privileges by Honorius III.; and its founder is made out to be a second Christ. So his brother must come and have his say; and behold he comes in the strait, coarse, short serge dress; the people flock together out of the curiosity which has become universal; and the priest cannot very well stop at home. He ascends the pulpit, and begins in the way expected. He denounces riches in the hardest terms that he can find; he does not spare his brother one whit; sharper and keener come

his words. There must be absolute poverty; when Christ said that God cared for ravens and lilies, and much more would He care for us, He meant nothing less than that we are to trust in Him to provide for all our wants, and live from hand to mouth day after day. He points to his own Order as the proof that God does thus meet the wants of those who give up all for Him. "A few years ago," he cries, "we were but a handful of men, and people said we should starve, but now there are many thousands, and the number is constantly increasing." Certainly, if such teaching could ever have any force, it was when one Pope had died leaving two million florins of gold, and another was trying to seize the inheritance for his own use.*

But this is only the prelude. He goes on to speak of St. Francis as their founder, and compares him unblushingly with Christ. The conformity in their characters was so complete, indeed, that Christ had appeared to him, and had fixed in his side the wound, and in his hands and feet the nails. Worse than even this, he declares that the religion of the Apostles is now practically superseded. The scheme of Providence he declares to be that, as there are three Persons in the Trinity, there are three Dispensations. That of the Father terminated when the Law was abolished by the Gospel; that of the Son was now drawing to a close, and was being followed by that of the Spirit. The use of the Gospel was therefore superseded; and now he produces from some part of his serge dress a book which he calls the Eternal Gospel, in the name of the Holy Spirit. The Church of Rome cleared itself of this infamy, after a time, and the Eternal Gospel proved to be very temporary.

As we should expect, many of these advocates of simplicity soon abandoned the poverty they had preached, overstrained and absurd as it was; the worst vices of human nature were found in them; they became the pests of society, worming their way into domestic secrets, selling pardons for money, and sometimes tempting to

* *History of the Middle Ages*, Pearson.

crimes that they might absolve the culprits on the payment of heavy fines.

As for their pretended poverty, it became the greatest farce, but they kept up the pretence of being true to their original vows—Jesuits before the time. The Franciscans said they were still poor, when they had jewels and money in abundance, because their property belonged to the Church; the Dominicans, because it pertained to the Order; the Conventuals (a variety of Franciscans), because they professed only to enjoy the interest of money, the principal of which was still vested in the donors. Well may Emily Holt exclaim: "Is there any length of absurdity to which a blinded intellect and a fettered conscience are unable to go!" *

Wyclif did not spare these Orders, saying the Rule of Christ is enough for His servants, without any of these inventions of men. They were to him "stinking orders who love more their idle muck than they do their brethren in God," "hypocrites," "blind," "full of heresy," "limbs of the fiend," "tattered clouts," and "live devils."

What could people know of the Word of God in such times? There was scarcely any circulation of the fragments we have already noticed. Certainly, the Gospel and Epistle for the day were read in the vernacular, and there were occasional sermons of some sort. Another rude means of instruction was attempted through the Miracle Plays, which claim more than a passing notice. The taste for them spread, until in Wyclif's century they had become frequent, and were performed before great crowds at Chester, Coventry, Wakefield, York, Newcastle, Preston, Kendal, Wymondham, Dublin, and other places. Gregory Nazianzen, Jerome's master, and Patriarch of Constantinople, appears to have led the way by composing plays from the Old and New Testaments as substitutes for those of Sophocles and Euripides. He preserved the Greek model, but turned the choruses into Christian

* See her extremely interesting and reliable *John de Wycliffe*, founded upon Lechler, and a thorough study of the Reformer's works as published by Arnold.

hymns, the only one extant now being that on the Passion. Menestrier thinks that Mysteries were introduced amongst us by the pilgrims who went to the Holy Land,* the play of St. Catherine (A.D. 1100) being the first known. Often they consisted of single subjects, such as the conversion of Saul, or the casting out of devils from Mary Magdalene. In one instance, those who were crucified as Christ, or suspended as Judas, nearly lost their lives. The stage decorations were the church ornaments, and Steevens observes that there was always a buffoon in these plays, which was the devil, vinegar being applied to his nose to make him roar. His tormentor was another buffoon called the Vice, having a cap with ass's ears, and a dagger made of a thin lath. The nimble Vice would skip up, like a jackanapes, into the devil's neck, and ride him a course, belabouring him with his wooden dagger. His stage directions were indeed to lay about him with a long pole, and tumble the characters one over the other with great noise and riot.

In the Corpus Christi Plays there were theatres for the several scenes, large and high, placed upon wheels, and drawn to all the chief parts of the city. The ancient stage was often in three parts, according to Strutt. In the uppermost sat God, surrounded by His angels. In the second appeared the holy saints, and in the lowest the mere mortals. On one side of the lowest platform was a dark pitchy cavern, whence issued appearances of fire and flames, and when necessary the audience were treated to hideous noises and yellings. From this yawning cave the devils themselves constantly ascended.

Three Biblical Plays of this period are extant, having been found in the library at Tours. The first sets forth the Fall of Adam and Eve, "after which," said the stage order, "devils shall take them and put them into Hell, and they shall make a great smoke to rise in it, and cry aloud." The second play is the Death of Abel, after which the devils coming, Cain is led to Hell, being often struck, but they shall take Abel more mildly; then the

* Fosbroke's *Antiquities.*

Prophets shall be ready, each in a convenient place of concealment." The third play consists of these concealed prophets coming forward to prophesy of Christ. Hell was always represented by a whale's open jaws, made of painted pasteboard, with a fire lighted behind the lower jaw, so that it might seem to breathe flame. Often on the Feast of Corpus Christi, founded by Urban IV. in 1264, the Guilds combined to give such representations: the tanners would take the Fall of Lucifer; the drapers, the Creation, the Fall, and the Death of Abel; the water-carriers, the Flood and the Ark; the barbers and wax chandlers, the histories of Lot and Abraham. This was at Chester, and they were continued until the Bible became a household book. At Coventry, the old account-books are preserved, and we can still see the prices of "an earthquake and a bowel for the same," "three worlds painted," and as little as fivepence for "setting the world on fire." * In another list we find the following, though perhaps there was no intentional irreverence:—"God's coat of white-leather (6 skins)," "Cheverel (peruke) for God," "girdle for God," "paid to God 2s.," "item to the divyll and to Judas, 18d." †

* *Illustrations of English Religion*, H. Morley. The woodcuts are taken from this work, where a large section of one of the Miracle Plays will be found.

† The "Harrowing of Hell" was a favourite performance, and we see what was necessary for it from the accounts still preserved in Bristol:—

"Item, that Master Canning hath delivered this 4th day of July 1470 to Master Nicholas Peters, Vicar of St. Mary Redcliffe, a new sepulchre well gilt and a cover thereto.

"Item, an image of God Almighty rising out of the same sepulchre, with a lath made of timber and the iron work thereof.

"Item, thereto belongeth Heaven made of timber and stained cloths.

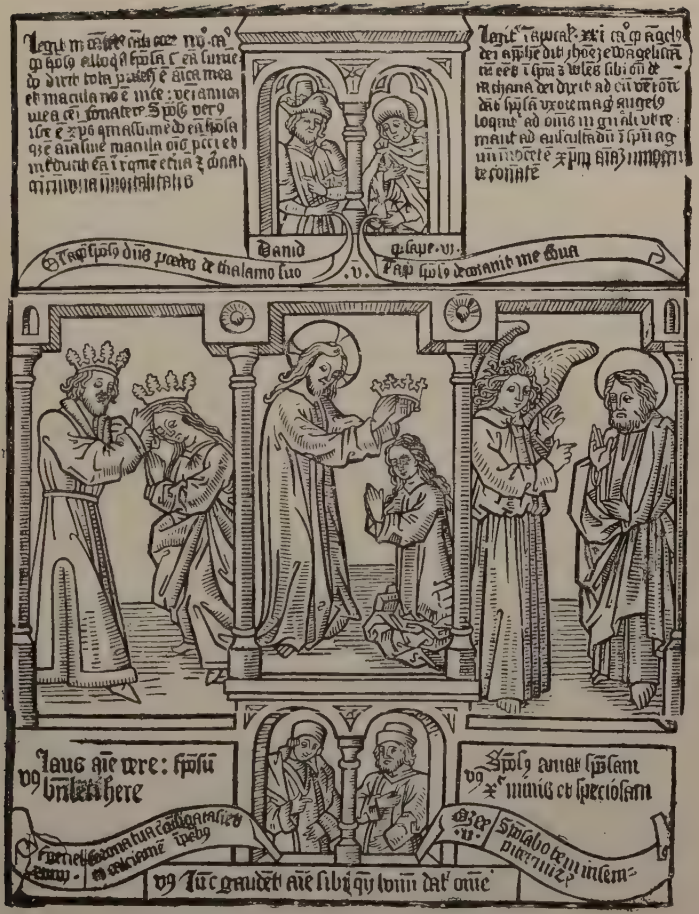
"Item, Hell made of timber and iron work, with devils to the number of thirteen.

"Item, four knights armed, keeping the sepulchre, with their weapons in their hands, two axes, two spears and two shields.

"Item, four pair of angel wings for four angels, made of timber and well painted.

"Item, the Father, the crown and visage, the ball with a cross upon it, well gilt with fine gold.

"Item, the Holy Ghost coming out of Heaven into the sepulchre.



FACSIMILE OF THE "BIBLIA PAUPERUM."

SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN EXECUTED BETWEEN A.D. 1420 AND 1435.

Could any good whatever be done by such representations? The harm is sufficiently obvious in connecting sacred things with buffoonery.

One other means of instruction must be noticed, the "Biblia Pauperum." When these were introduced, however, it is impossible to say, but as common paper was made from rags at the close of the thirteenth century, they perhaps came into use soon afterwards. They consisted of a number of rude woodcuts, with Biblical sentences, and were most likely used in the instruction of children, as well as for household reading. The instruction they gave was small, but the price was no doubt low, and they were a good deal used, the few extant copies being much worn and mutilated. Some have thought they were later, and may have been Lawrence Coster's work. The histories and prophecies of the Old Testament figurative of Christ were mostly employed. Perhaps the word "predicatorum" should be added, as they are in fact a series of skeleton sermons, ornamented with woodcuts to warm the preacher's imagination, and stored with texts to assist his memory. Other abridgments of greater extent were called "Bibles of the poor," notably St. Bonaventure's, consisting of extracts for the use of preachers. The German editions had absurd woodcuts, the face of the serpent being like that of a Bavarian broom-girl.*

"Item, belongeth to the four angels, four chevelers (or supports—the angels would be personified by four boys or young females)."

Harrington's *Nugæ Antiquæ*, by Park. Much more on this subject will also be found in Lardner.

* Other particulars will be found in Horne. The rarity of the "Biblia Pauperum" has led to these "poor men's Bibles" being sold at very high prices. Mr. Willet's was sold in 1813 for two hundred and forty-five guineas. There are copies in the Bodleian Library.

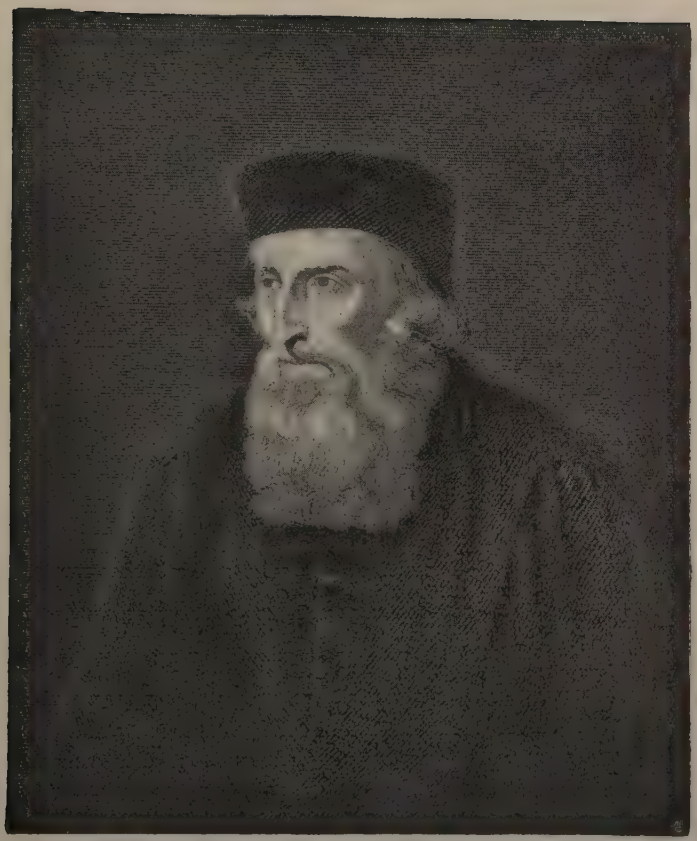
CHAPTER XIX

JOHN WYCLIF—II.

"John Wiclif may be justly accounted one of the greatest men that our country has produced. He is one of the very few who have left the impress of their minds not only on their own age but on all time."

DEAN HOOK.

"A good man there was of religion
That was a poorè parson of a town,
But rich he was of holy thought and work.
He was also a learned man, a clerk,
That Christès gospel truely wolde preach;
His parishens devoutly would he teach.
Benign he was, and wonder diligent,
And in adversity full patient;
And such he was yproved often sithes.
Full loth were him to cursen for his tithes,
But rather would he yeven out of doubt
Unto his poorè parishens about,
Of his offering, and eke of his substance.
He could in little things have suffisance.
Wide was his parish, and houses far asunder,
But he ne left nought for no rain ne thunder,
In sickness and in mischief to visite
The furthest in his parish, much and lite,
Upon his feet, and in his hand a staff.
This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,
That first he wrought, and afterward he taught.
Out of the Gospel he the wordès caught
And this figure he aded yet thereto,—
That if gold rustè, what should iron do?
For if a priest be foul, on whom we trust,
No wonder is a lewed man to rust. . . .
Well ought a priest ensample for to give
By his cleanessè, how his sheep should live.
He settè not his benefice to hire,
And left his sheep acumbered in the mire,
And ran unto London, unto Saint Poules,
To seeken him a chanterie for souls,



JOHN WYCLIF.

FROM THE PICTURE BY SIR ANTONIO MORE,
NOW IN THE RECTORY OF WYCLIFFE, RICHMONDSHIRE.

Or with a brotherhood to be withold;
But dwelt at home, and keptè well his fold,
So that the wolf ne made it not miscarry.
He was a shepherd and no mercenary.
And though he holy were and virtuous,
He was to sinful men not dispitous,
Ne of his speechè dangerous ne digne,
But in his teaching discreet and benign.
To drawen folk to Heaven with fairèness
By good ensample was his business:
But if were any person obstinate,
What so he were of high or low estate,
Him would he snibben sharply for the nonce.
A better priest I trow that nowhere none is.
He waited after no pomp ne reverence,
He maked him no spiced conscience;
But Christès lore, and his Apostles' twelve,
He taught, but first he followed it himselve."

Chaucer's supposed description of Wyclif.

Surely it was high time that someone should set before the people God's own truth in its clearness and fulness, that by its light the darkness might be dispelled. And so, let us turn to Wyclif, raised up by God for this very purpose, living to see it accomplished, and dying peacefully in his old age, in spite of all the attacks made upon him. His history is a little confused, as there were two Wyclifs at the same time, just as we have had two Ælfrics. The principal facts stand out clearly, however, and are for ever interesting to all who value the heritage into which the English have come.

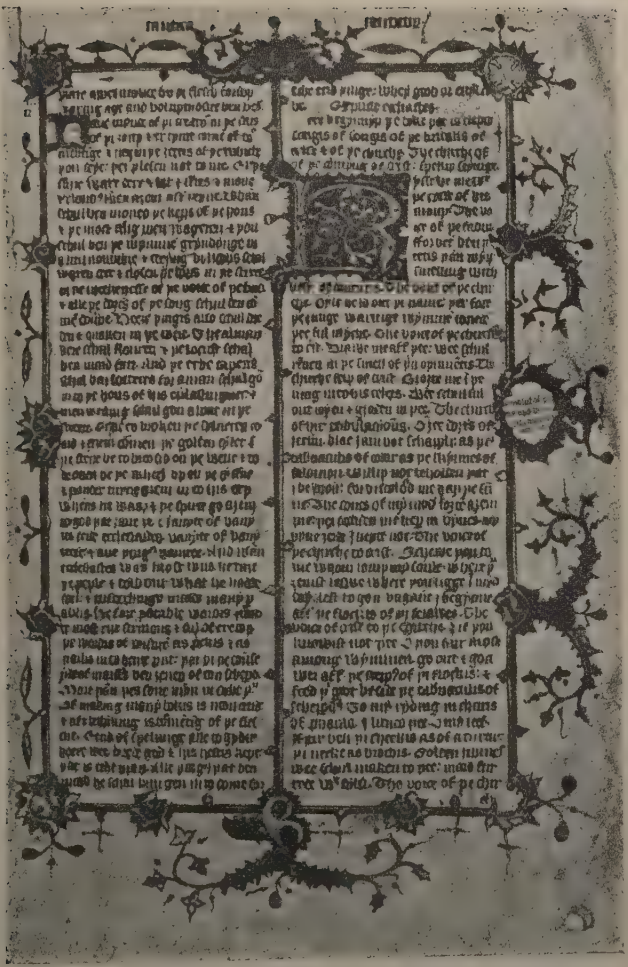
He belonged to the same parts of Northern Yorkshire apparently from which Richard Rolle came, and was born in 1324, about thirty years after the death of Roger Bacon, who had preceded him as a scientific reformer. The family was a good one, and gave its name to the village of Wycliffe, on the banks of the Wye. Having received the best education which could be given in the neighbourhood, he was sent to Oxford when about sixteen, entering Queen's College the same year that it was founded, and though not poor, becoming in his main characteristics one of Chaucer's poor students, whose only thought of life was as of a space in which a man should be ever learning or ever teaching. There he showed

uncommon proficiency, and was chosen Fellow of his College; in 1361, Master of Balliol; and four years later Warden of Canterbury Hall. "Ah, Lord!" he exclaims, in one of his works, looking back to these days, "if all the study that men now have with a multitude of new and costly books were turned into the making of Bibles, and in studying and teaching of them, how much should God's law be furthered and kept where now it is hindered, unstudied, and unread." *

The University was in a strange state indeed, between Schoolmen and Friars of all descriptions. That of Paris had decayed somewhat, owing to the English wars, and Oxford had grown, though it was a town of schools rather than of colleges. A sufficient proof, however, of the neglect of Biblical study is found in the fact that even the Latin Bibles were very scarce. Armachanis sent two students from Ireland about this time to study Divinity, but after two years they returned, not having been able to buy themselves a Bible in all Oxford.† But Wyclif was to work a change. Following in the track of such vigorous and independent thinkers as Bacon, Duns Scotus, and Ockham, he was to go far beyond them all. Gradually his fame spread abroad, and he acquired the name of the "Gospel Doctor," from his acquaintance with Scripture, and the supremacy he at all times gave to it. His influence grew to be considerable, and later on, when a Bull was sent to the University by Pope Gregory XI., hostile to the views of Wyclif, it was looked very coldly at, and the University may be said to have practically sided with the Gospel Doctor. In fact, they stood by him till he gave up transubstantiation, three years before his death.

One service that he rendered in his earlier Oxford days was rendered to the whole country, and indeed to all time. The Pope, Urban V., revived his claim to an annual tribute of a thousand marks from England, with the whole of the arrears for thirty-three years. Henry III.

* *Impedimenta Evangelizantium*, Of a feigned contemplative life.
† Bagster's *Hexapla*, Introduction.



A PAGE FROM THE MANUSCRIPT OF WYCLIF'S BIBLE.

FORMERLY IN THE POSSESSION OF THOMAS WOODSTOCK, DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, PUT TO DEATH BY RICHARD II. IN 1397.

had paid the money occasionally, when he had any object to gain, and Edward I. for some years, the latest payment on record being in the seventeenth of his reign.*

The king, Edward III., brought the claim before Parliament, who decided that neither King John nor any other king could bring this realm into such thraldom but by common consent of Parliament. The following year, an able writer took up the Papal cause, and published a vindication of the claim, closing with a challenge to Wyclif by name, as chaplain to the king, which he had now become, to confute his arguments, if he could. This Wyclif soon did with a vengeance, and from that time Peter's pence and tribute have been abandoned.†

Considerable doubt has recently been thrown on his having been Warden of Canterbury Hall, there having been not only one but several priests of the Reformer's name in his day. But it may be taken as almost conclusive evidence of the generally received opinion, that one of his opponents, William Woodford, who wrote against him soon after his death, speaks of his holding the preferment.‡ It was taken from him, however, on the death of Archbishop Islip, the founder of the Hall, the matter coming before the Pope, who decided it against him in 1370. Two years later he took his degree of Doctor of Divinity, and became Theological Lecturer.

A little later (1374–76) his hostility to the Papacy was further increased in a way which reminds us of the shock which Martin Luther received on his visit to Rome. He was appointed one of seven ambassadors to the Pope, the conferences being held at Bruges. They were long and fruitless, but they opened his eyes more than ever to the rottenness of the Papal system, and he returned from them with a strong desire to oppose it, might and

* Prynne's *Constitution*, vol. iii.

† Lechler thinks that Wyclif had a seat in the Parliament of 1366 as a clerical expert—a Government Commissioner.

‡ See this matter fully gone into in Vaughan's *John de Wycliffe*.

main. He had appealed to the Pope once, but he now began to call him "the most cursed of clippers and purse kervers."

The mission to Bruges was important in another respect. Whilst there the old Flemish city became the seat of negotiations between France and England, and amongst the English ambassadors was John of Gaunt. Doubtless the powerful patronage which he threw over the Reformer through many years was owing in part to the friendship formed between them at this time. John of Gaunt, a king's son and a king's father, was naturally one of the most powerful men of the day, and he stood by Wyclif until he wrote against transubstantiation, when, like his University, he gave him up.

The Reformer's views, when he settled partly down to his great work of giving the entire Bible to the people, were not altogether what we should now call Protestant. They were mostly so, however, and he was saved from incorporating any false doctrine. He condemned the worship of images, and denounced all the commerce of indulgences. It was a little later that he said that Purgatory had no foundation in Scripture, but was a fable used by Anti-Christ to spoil men by means of indulgences and simoniacal merchandise. Faith in the Saviour, working by love, he affirmed to be the condition of salvation, holding that we are justified by the righteousness of Christ alone. His views of the Divine authority and sufficiency of Scripture were of course strong, and he rejected the Apocryphal Books from the Canon. In one of his sermons, at Lutterworth, to the living of which he was presented in 1375, he says—

"Though there were a hundred Popes, and though all the Friars in the world were turned into Cardinals, yet we could learn more from the Bible than from that vast multitude."

Imagine him, then, chiefly in a quiet Leicestershire retreat, a small market town, with a little stream, a petrifying spring, a cage for the detention of evil doers, a cucking-stool for scolds, and a parish cat-of-nine-tails. Here he

Wycliffe Church in [illegible]

devoted himself to the congenial task of turning his Latin Vulgate into the English of his time.

> "So did he travel on life's common way
> In cheerful lowliness, and yet his heart
> The mightiest duties on itself did lay."

He was not trying his prentice hand exactly, having made a beginning no earlier than 1356, when he translated the Revelation of St. John, with a short Commentary of his own, which was several times revised. The occasion

WYCLIFFE. (*From Hallam's "History of Richmondshire."*

of this was a fearful pestilence, which swept away vast multitudes, and, combined with other causes, produced a general gloom, Oxford being more wretched than most towns.* He had also formerly translated the Gospels, with an Exposition, the notes being chiefly from the Fathers.

Doubtless he was assisted by a circle of friends, but how far their participation went it is not easy to say.

* *The Last Age of the Church*, a tract for the times, may be wrongly attributed to him.

Forshall and Madden, the recent and laborious editors of the whole, say "there can be no doubt that the accomplishment of the work must be attributed mainly to his zeal, encouragement, and direction. He was led to the undertaking slowly and gradually, and it was not completed until after several preliminary efforts." The fifteen MSS. collated by them show a great diversity. It is possible that, whilst Wyclif took the New Testament, the Old was put into the hands either of "Nicholas de Hereford" alone, or others with him, the whole being completed and corrected by Wyclif. In Baruch iii. 20 is found "Explicit translationem Nicolay de Hereford." Of course Wyclif had a party, and Hereford was known as one of them at Oxford. He belonged to Queen's College, and was excommunicated by Archbishop Courtney in 1382. From this sentence, however, he appealed to the Pope, and is said to have gone to Rome, where he was placed in confinement. During an insurrection there, he was set at liberty by the populace, and after many vicissitudes, was made Chancellor of Hereford in 1394, and in 1397 Treasurer in that Cathedral. In 1417, from whatever cause, he resigned his office, and entered the Carthusian Monastery of St. Ann, Coventry, where he died. The probability is that, as his contribution breaks off abruptly in the middle of a verse, the cause was his citation to appear before his superiors, which gives us another glimpse of the difficulties under which the work was done. His translation is very literal, and he never introduces textual glosses.

Wyclif's labours were carried on at Oxford in part, as well as at Lutterworth, and it was in the midst of them, and perhaps as the result of excessive toil, that he fell ill and was thought to be dying. It is a famous and probably a true story that, in the severity of his illness, a body of mendicant Friars waited on him to set forth his heretical views, and to warn him of his supposed danger. He admitted them, and listened patiently to what they had to say; then, "Raise me on my pillow," he said to his attendant, and, looking at them as they

stood before him, "I shall not die," he exclaimed, "but live, still further to declare the evil deeds of the Friars."

There are many references in Wyclif's works to the need of the translation. For instance, in his *Office of Curates* we read: "They dread the Pope's Law and Statutes made by Bishops and other officers, more than the noble law of the Gospel. Therefore they have many great and costly books of man's law, and study them much,

LUDGARSHALL CHURCH.
THE SCENE OF WYCLIF'S MINISTRATIONS, 1368–1374.

but few curates have the Bible and Expositions of the Gospel; they study them but little and do them less."

So in his Tract on the Song of the Ordinal of Salisbury, Wyclif reproves the light singing then newly introduced in public worship, which, he says, "hinders much the preaching of the gospel." Then he adds:—

"If all the study and labour that men have now, about Salisbury use, with multitudes of new costly portesses, and all other such books, were turned into making of

bibles, and in studying and teaching thereof, how much should God's Law be furthered and known and kept! And now it is so much hindered, unstudied, and unkept! How should rich men be excused that spend so much in great chapelries, and costly books of men's ordinance, for fame of the world, and will not spend so much about books of God's Law, and to study them and teach them, since this were without comparison better, easier, safer."

The translation was taken from the Vulgate, as a matter of course in this still early era, and very literally was the work done. Wyclif was fully resolved that, whatever his enemies might say of him, they should never say that he had perverted the Word of God, and his principle was like Rolle's, "no strange English, but that which is easiest and commonest." As regards its general style, it differed from that of his two chief contemporaries, Chaucer and Langlande, the former of whom addressed himself more to the higher classes, and the latter to the poor. He is mostly free from the Romance influence to which Chaucer owed so much, and has a marked preference for Saxon words. Perhaps we should not be far wrong in saying that Wyclif's translation offers us a fairer specimen of the common English speech of the period than do the works of any of his contemporaries.*

None of the principal modern languages was so late in its formation, or in its application to the purposes of literature, as the English, arising as it did out of the Saxon branch of the great Teutonic stock, modified by the Norman Conquest. The slow progress of the language is chiefly to be ascribed to this, the native inhabitants being degraded in every way, and all power transferred to the foreigners. Robert of Gloucester (A.D. 1290) proves that, in his time, the superior ranks continued to use the French language. The earliest legal instrument in English known to exist bears the date of 1343. Sir John Mandeville (A.D. 1350) may pass for the Father of English prose, no original work being so ancient as his *Travels*. The Academical Library at Oxford in 1300 consisted of a few tracts and books

* *Changes in the English Language*, H. T. W. Wood, B.A. 1870.

In Lutterworth Study.

kept in chests under St. Mary's Church. By the account-books of Bolton Abbey, about the beginning of the fourteenth century, three books only appear to have been purchased in forty years, though Bolton was perhaps more notable for ignorance and jollity than the average monastery.

LUTTERWORTH CHURCH.

So that, for the end of the fourteenth century to produce a Chaucer, worthy to stand in the triumvirate with Dante and Petrarch, and a Wyclif with the complete English Bible in his hand, is memorable.

Here is a sample of it extracted from Forshall and Madden's edition:—

"And Caym was greetli wroth, and therewith felle

his cheré. And the Lord seide to hym, 'Whi art thow wroth, and whi therwith fallith thi face. Shall thow not reseyve wel if thow dost; ellis forsothe euel, anoon in thi gatis thi synnes shal ben at thee? but under thee shall be the appetite of hym and thow shalt have lordship of hym.' Anf Caym seide to Abel his brother, 'Go we out.' Whanne thei weren in the field aroos there with Caym agins his brother Abel and slowe hym."

Here is also a sample from the New Testament:—"He that is sowun into good loond is this that herith the word and understondith and bryngith forth fruyt, and summe makith an hundred fold treuli another sixty fold and another thritty fold" (Matt. xiii. 23).

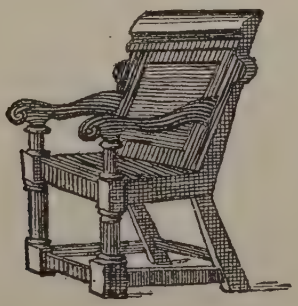
The close of John, 1st Epistle, is: "My little sones, Kepe ye you fro mawmites," *i.e.* puppet dolls and such-like.

Such extracts begin to look like the English tongue, and if the spelling is not modern, we must remember that it is the first really English translation, the Saxon MSS. that we have considered so far being no more modern English than Latin is Italian.

It is possible enough, however, that the gap between the "easy and common" English of Richard Rolle and Wyclif's work may have been filled up by others, and we are not careful to defend him in this matter. In our own days of printing, such controversies are not likely to occur, but individual MSS. have been lost beyond all trace, or destroyed with malice aforethought. It is certain that his work does not stand alone. About the same time a curious volume appeared, in which is found a portion of St. Matthew's Gospel, several of the Epistles, and a dialogue introducing portions of the Old Testament. Somewhere also in the latter half of the fourteenth century a version of St. Paul's Epistles was made, Latin and English being given paragraph by paragraph. These authors, whoever they may have been, have given no clue to their names, recognising possibly the danger of their work.

Of course, words distinctive of Popish tenets and practices were excluded, and thus we need not be surprised at Sir Thomas More's charge that he maliciously planted in the Holy Text such words as might in the reader's ears serve to the proof of such heresies as he went about to sow.

On the other hand, in spite of the Vulgate having been the Authorised Version hitherto, many common Latinised words were not then understood, and such



WYCLIF'S CHAIR.

glosses as the following are found in the margin of some of the MSS. :—

yvil fame	or	schendes chepe
affection		love
a libel		a litel boke
detractours		open bakbyters
benignity		good will
sacrilegie		theft of good things
maales		men

Wyclif's version is "robust, terse, popular, and homely," and it is the parent stock of our Authorised Version. Dr. Mombert gives a number of illustrations of this, such as "streit is the gate and narewe the weye," "fer be it fro thee, Lord," "the depe thingis of God," "the cuppe of blessynge the which we blessen ;" and in the follow-

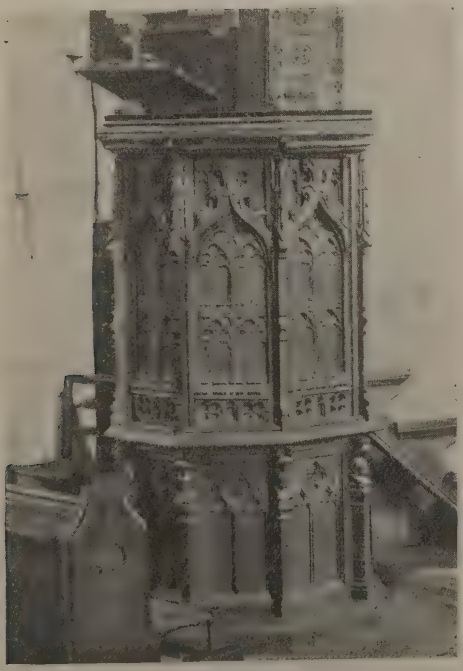
ing extract both agreement and difference are seen at once :—

S. Luke vi. 20–26.

Wyclif (1380).	Authorised Version (1611).
20. And whanne his iyen weren cast vp in to his disciplis : he seide, Blessid be ye pore men, for the Kyngdom of God is youre.	And hee lifted vp his eyes on his disciplis, and said, Blessed bee yee poore : for yours is the kingdome of God.
21. Blessid be ye that now hungren : for ye schuln be fulfillid, Blessid be ye that now wepen : for ye schuln leiye.	Blessed are ye that hunger now : for yee shall bee filled. Blessid are yee that weepe now, for ye shall laugh.
22. blessid ye sculen be whanne men schuln hate you, departe you aweie, and putte schenschip to you ; cast out youre name, as yuel for mannes sone.	Blessed are yee when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shal reproach you, and cast out your name as euill, for the Sonne of mannes sake.
23. ioye ye in that dai, and be ye glad : for lo youre mede is myche in heuene, for aftir these thingis : the fadirs of hem diden to profetis.	Rejoice ye in that day, and leape for joy : for beholde, your reward is great in heauen, for in the like maner did their fathers vnto the Prophets.
24. Netheles wo to you riche men : than han youre comfort.	Woe unto you that are rich : for yee haue receiued your consolation.
25. wo to you that ben fulfillid ; for ye sculn hungre, wo to you that now leiyen ; for ye schuln moorne and wepe.	Woe unto you that are full : for yee shall hunger. Woe vnto you that laugh now : for yee shall mourne and weepe.
26. Wo to you whanne alle men schulen blesse you, aftir these thingis the fadris of hem diden to profetis.*	Wo vnto you when all men shall speake well of you : for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

* *English Versions*, J. T. Mombert, D.D.

It is said, on the authority of Dr. Tregelles, that not many years ago, Wyclif's version was read aloud in Yorkshire, nearly every word and expression being understood. Dr. Eadie mentions a number of words still surviving in Scotch, and many others, which by a slight



PULPIT IN LUTTERWORTH CHURCH.

change of spelling may be easily identified :—abaished, bottler, parfyt, snybbe, spitele, etc.

Of course, no Hebrew or Greek letter was looked at from the beginning to the end of the translation, but it is probable that some use was made of a French translation of the twelfth century, published by F. Michel in 1860.

It was emphatically a People's Bible that Wyclif

spent his strength upon, and probably a great number of copies of it were made. Knighton looks at it from the old Catholic standpoint when he says: "This Master John Wyclif translated the Gospels out of Latin into English, and by that means laid it more open to the laity and to women who could read than it used to be to the most learned of the clergy, and those of them who had the best understanding, and so the gospel pearl is cast abroad, and trodden under foot of swine, and that which used to be precious both to clergy and laity is made as it were the common jest of both; and the jewel of the Church is turned into the sport of the people, and what was before the talent of the clergy and Doctors of the Church is made for ever common to the laity." Yes, it is for ever, gentle Knighton; the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth, and will go on shining. And it is Knighton himself, a Canon of Leicester, one of Wyclif's bitterest foes, who perforce gives him the highest character for the execution of such a work, saying that "he came to be reckoned inferior to none of his time in philosophy, and incomparable in the performance of school exercises, a man of profound wit (intellect) and very strong and powerful in disputations, and by the common sort of Divines esteemed little less than a God." *

* Quoted by Professor Burrows, *Wiclif's Place in History.*

WYCLIF'S VESTMENT.

CHAPTER XX

PURVEY

"Some seek devotion, toil, war, good, or crime,
According as their souls were formed to sink or climb."

Wyclif's work was continued by John Purvey, or Purnay, who brought out a revised translation a little later. He was an eloquent man, famous for his skill in the law, and was called the Library of the Lollards. He appears to have been curate at Lutterworth, and no writings of his appear until after Wyclif's death. His improved version was not the work of any single man, however, as is discovered from an account of the process pursued, given by Purvey himself. He says they first of all gathered many old Bibles and Doctors' glosses together, and made a new Latin text. Then they consulted old grammarians and divines, whenever there was anything hard. Then they translated as clearly as they could, sentence by sentence, having "many good fellows and cunning" at the work. This second version is not so literal as Wyclif's, but more rhythmical and idiomatic. It is thought that Purvey engaged in it on being ordered not to preach, a mandate being issued in 1387 by the Bishop of Worcester, prohibiting Nicholas Hereford, John Purvey, and three others from preaching in his diocese, and mentioning them as being leagued together in a certain College disallowed by law.

He probably wrote "The Door of Holy Scripture," which is found affixed to many of the manuscript Bibles of this period.

In this he contends for the supreme authority and entire sufficiency of the Scriptures, and the necessity for translating them into English, as also for the right of private judgment. The lay people, he says, had long thirsted and hungered for the Holy Scripture, and had kept it with great danger. "So for these considerations and mere charity, for comfort and salvation of my poor Christian brethren of this Realm, I, a poor simple creature and clerk, have translated the Bible out of Latin into English." The close of the chapter is very touching. He has been answering those who objected that he was not so holy a man as Jerome by saying that neither was Jerome so holy as the Apostles, and yet he made the best translation he could, as others also. He then cries out: "O Lord God, seeing that, at the beginning of the Faith, so many men translated into Latin to the great profit of the Latin men, suffer, Lord, one creature to translate the Bible into English for the great profit and wealth of English people. For, if worldly clerks look well upon their chronicles and other stories, they shall find that Bede, an Englishman, translated the Bible into Saxon tongue; and not only Bede, but also King Alfred, that founded Oxford, translated in his latter day the beginning of the Psalter into the Saxon tongue. And so, finally, God of His mercy grant us all grace to know well the understanding of Holy Scriptures and so to live Christianly according to the same, and always gladly to bear Christ's cross, that is to suffer meekly pain and sorrow and tribulation in this life, so that we may obtain the glory promised to us by our Saviour Jesus Christ."

Purvey's version was published by the Rev. W. W. Skeat in 1879, in a popular form, reprinted from the splendid volume of Forshall and Madden. For this fine but somewhat inaccessible work, one hundred and seventy MSS. of the Middle English version made by Wyclif and his followers were examined. It was found that the whole of these could be divided into two families, the version in one being close, literal, and unpolished, and in the other

less laboured and smoother. The first was probably by Wyclif and his helpers, and the second by Purvey and his.

With regard to the language being Middle English, Mr. Skeat says—

"The chief stages of the English language are three: viz., Anglo-Saxon from the earliest times of which we have records to about 1150; Middle English from about that time to 1500; and Modern English from about the fifteenth century. The Anglo-Saxon is almost free from admixture with Norman French; the Middle English is remarkable for the numerous Norman French words which are mixed up with it, so as to form an essential part of the vocabulary; the Modern English is marked by a still larger increase in its vocabulary by the help of borrowed words taken from almost every language of any note. Of Middle English we find three well-marked varieties or dialects:—Northern, including what is now often called Lowland Scotch; Midland, chiefly in use between the Humber and the Thames; Southern, chiefly to the south of the Thames. The Midland dialect is that which finally prevailed, and to which modern literary English is most nearly related."

It seems extraordinary that there should be one hundred and seventy manuscript Bibles by either Wyclif or Purvey, which can be handled to-day, in spite of all the opprobrium cast upon their names, and the proscription to which their works were subjected. Of these, one belonged to Humphrey, the "good" Duke of Gloucester; another to Henry VI., who gave it to the Charterhouse; another apparently to Richard III.; another to Henry VII.; another to Edward VI.; and another was presented to Queen Elizabeth, as a New Year's gift, by her chaplain.*

Evidently this great Bible work influenced the higher classes in the country as well as the mass of the people.

We may illustrate the distinction between Wyclif and Hereford's translation and that of Purvey by the

* Westcott.

46th Psalm in each, as given in Dr. Mombert's selections :—

Wyclif and Hereford.	Purvey.
1. Oure God refut, and vertue; helpere in tribulaciouns, that founden vs ful myche.	Oure God, thou art refuyt, and vertu: helpere in tribulacions, that han founde vs greetly.
2. Therfore wee shul not drede, whil the erthe shal be disturbid; and hillis shul be born ouer in to the herte of the se.	Therfor we schulen not drede, while the erthe schal be troblid, and the hillis schulen be borun ouer in to the herte of the see.
3. Ther souneden, and ben disturbid the watris of hem: the hillis ben disturbid in the strengthe of it.	The watris of hem sowneden, and weren troblid; hillis weren troblid togidere in the strengthe of hym.
4. The bure of the flod gladith the cite of God, the alther heghist halewide his tabernacle.	The feersnesse of flood makith glad the citee of God; the higheste God hath halewid his tabernacle.
5. God in the myddel of it shal not be stirid; God shal helpen it erli fro the morutid.	God in the myddis therof schal not be moued; God schal helpe it eerli in the great morewtid.
6. Jentilis ben disturbid, and reumes be inbowid; he ghaf his vois, moued is the erthe.	Hethene men weren disturbid togidere, and rewmes weren bowid doun. God ghaf his vois, the erthe was moued.
11. The Lord of vertues with vs; oure vndertakere God of Jacob.	The Lord of vertues is with us; God of Jacob is oure vptakere.

There are a number of notes in Purvey's version, and for many of these he was indebted to Lyra, of whom it was said, "Si Lyra non lyrasset, Luther non cantasset," but his commentaries are completely forgotten now.

Purvey was seized and cruelly tortured by Archbishop Arundel. His faith proved unequal to the trial, and he

pronounced his recantation at St. Paul's Cross in 1396. The archbishop rewarded his penitence with a benefice. We find him, however, a second time imprisoned, and this time by Archbishop Chicheley in 1421, and he probably died in confinement. In his sermons he is said to have assailed with great vehemence all preachers but those of his own party, more especially his master's chief foes, the mendicant Friars.*

* Dr. Gasquet has lately attempted to show that Purvey or other helpers were the sole translators, and that Wyclif cannot be proved to have had any hand in the work. He, however, thinks that when Knyghton, Canon of Leicester, and a contemporary, says that "Wycliffe translated from Latin into English the Gospel which Christ gave to clerks and teachers of the Church," and backs up his contention by references from William de Saint Amour about the evils of the time when the Gospel should be made too cheap and common, he is not referring to the New Testament at all! He denies also that there is any proof in the often quoted 7th Article of the Oxford Synod: "We command and ordain that henceforth no one . . . read, wholly or in part, any such book, booklet, or tract lately written in the time of the said John Wyclif, or since, under pain of excommunication." Perhaps no absolute proof, standing alone, but when connected with the universal testimony of all ages that Wyclif was himself the translator, these two will probably be enough for most of our readers.—*The Old English Bible*, F. A. Gasquet, D.D., O.S.B.

CHAPTER XXI

JOHN WYCLIF—III

"But, to outweigh all harm, the sacred Book
In dusty sequestration wrapped too long,
Assumes the accents of our native tongue;
And he who guides the plough, or wields the crook,
With understanding spirit now may look
Upon her records, listen to her song,
And sift her laws—much wondering that the wrong,
Which faith has suffered, Heaven could calmly brook."

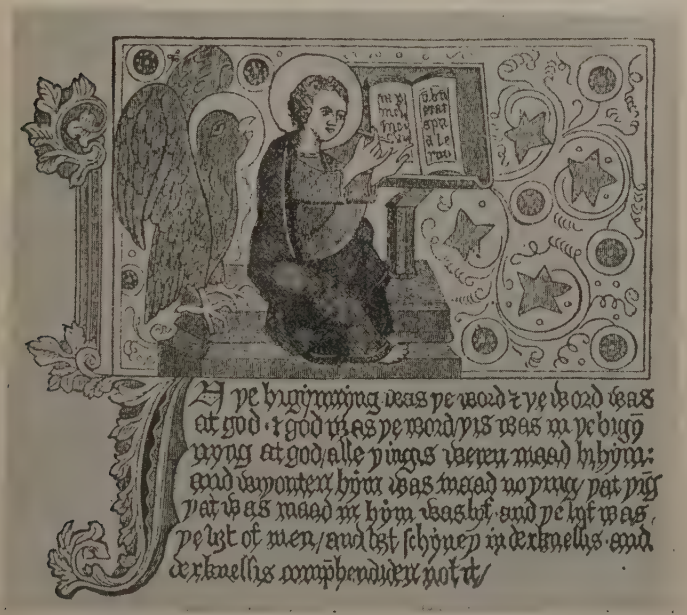
WORDSWORTH.

Not only, however, was the Bible thus put into a complete English dress two generations before the invention of printing, but Wyclif organised a system of itinerant ministration that it might be faithfully set forth. By the contagion of example, he had gathered around him at Oxford a number of "poor priests," and many of them now went out preaching, especially in his own counties, Oxfordshire and Leicestershire. There thus arose a cry for portions of the Gospel, and copies were multiplied far and wide. Milton's words, relating to the later and final Reformation, apply also to its beginnings under Wyclif:—

"Then was the sacred Bible sought out from dusty corners; the schools were opened; Divine and human learning raked out of the embers of forgotten tongues; Princes of cities trooped apace to the newly erected banners of salvation; martyrs with the unresistible might of weakness shook the powers of darkness, and scorned the fiery rage of the old red dragon." *

* *On Reformation in England.*

Wyclif also published a great variety of pamphlets and treatises, contributing as much to the literature of the period as Augustine to his. In some of these he met the arguments raised against his work, and we need not be surprised that he sometimes used strong language, the title of one of them being: "How Anti-Christ and



FACSIMILE OF PAGE IN WYCLIF'S BIBLE.

his Clerks travail to destroy Holy Writ, and to make Christian Men unstable in the Faith, and to set their Ground in Devils of Hell." The errors and corruptions of the Church of Rome were laid bare, so that he who ran could read, and he often encouraged the people to get as much of the Scripture as they could, though without note or comment.

Of course this could not but raise up a storm of opposition, though he remained unhurt through it all. Dr. Jenkyn says: "Whenever some Dr. Angelicus descends and agitates the settled waters, then always a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, and withered, creep from their five porches to brandish their crutches at the intruder, or to mutter their anathemas against the innovation, instead of welcoming the benignant visitor, sharing in the healthiness of the agitation, and becoming healed of whatsoever diseases they had." *

Wyclif was indeed a memorable example of the delivering hand of God; troubled on every side, yet never cornered and his retreat cut off; perplexed and seemingly without a path, but always having one marked out for him; persecuted, but never alone in his persecution, like the panting hart that is caught at last; cast down, but not destroyed (2 Cor. iv. 8).

There was always some thing or person interposing for his help, as in the case of Cowper, with his fits of madness.

He was cited twice before Convocation at London, on the charge of heresy, and in 1382 at Oxford, where he was condemned. His cause was, however, manfully espoused by John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, who afterwards said in Parliament, when it was proposed to suppress the Translation—

"We will not be the dregs of all, seeing other nations have the law of God, which is the law of our Faith, written in their own language."

At one of his citations, the Bishop of London and John of Gaunt brawled together for some time as to whether Wyclif should sit or stand, but the bishop was the better brawler, so that the duke "blushed and was ashamed because he could not overpass the bishop in brawling and railing, and therefore fell to plain threatening." The bishop was popular with the assembly, however, who would not have him insulted, and the Council was broken up before nine o'clock.

* *Life of Baxter.*

John of Gaunt's friendship may remind us of that of the Elector for Luther, and it was of the greatest service for a long time. It was not without variableness, however, and when his assistance was sought in connection with the Synod of 1382, he declined it, saying that he found the new opinions more fraught with danger than he had supposed, and that, in his judgment, it became the accused parties to submit to the authorities of the Church. He was indeed a liberal politician, and not a religious reformer, and was at that time intent upon conducting an expedition into Portugal, and was so far opposed that the fear of giving further offence may have mingled with other considerations. Besides, Wyclif had lately given up transubstantiation, the head and front of all offending. The Reformer's reply, however, both to the Synod and to John of Gaunt, was that it signified nothing that the Church had erred through many hundred Winters, and saints had died in error; for the loosing of Satan, as foretold by John, had filled the world with lies.

The Pope also took action, but it continually came to nothing, though Wyclif was perfectly aware of the danger he incurred. He had said in his Trialogus: "We Christians need not visit Pagans to convert them by enduring martyrdom on their behalf; we have only to declare with consistency the law of God before Cæsarian Prelates, and straightway the flower of martyrdom will be at hand." But he was never imprisoned even. Gregory XI. issued five Bulls against him on 22nd May 1377, but, before they were officially delivered, Edward III., with whom the execution of them lay, died (June 21). The next year, when Richard II. had come to the throne, Gregory sent another Bull rebuking the University of Oxford for suffering Wyclif's doctrine so long to take root, and commanding that he be apprehended immediately. To the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London also Gregory wrote, demanding that he be cast into prison. So he was brought up to London for trial, but whilst matters were proceeding, Lewis Clifford entered with a Royal message, prohibiting them from passing any

sentence. The Londoners also plainly showed their objection to tyranny, and directly afterwards the Pope died, and the thirty-nine years' schism between the rival Popes began. Urbane, otherwise called Turbanus, was so hot in his wars against Clement, the French Pope, that he had little time or inclination to pay much heed to Wyclif. Barton, however, Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, called together some Doctors in 1380, and denounced his doctrines, and in 1382 the Archbishop of Canterbury summoned Wyclif to appear before Convocation in London. It was in May, and they met in the great hall of the Dominican Monastery in Blackfriars, ten Bishops, sixteen Doctors of Laws, thirty Doctors of Theology, and four Bachelors of Laws. But this time they were interrupted by an earthquake! The whole city was shaken by it, and it would have broken up the assembly but for the firmness of the Primate. As William the Conqueror interpreted his fall on landing in England favourably, saying that he thus seized the land, so the archbishop construed the earthquake as a favourable omen. The commotion they had witnessed was produced by the expulsion of noxious vapours, and in the same way the purity and peace of the Church could only be secured by the expulsion of dangerous men. They plucked up their courage, and proceeded, as the earthquake did not, and some of Wyclif's doctrines were pronounced heretical and others erroneous.

Wyclif was also persecuted by the Friars, who filled the kingdom, and as a last indignity was cited before the Pope at Rome, which a shock of paralysis prevented his obeying.*

He professed, however, his readiness to defend himself before all true men, and especially the Pope, if his greatness consisted, not in worldly pomp, but in his more eminent conformity to the law of Christ, as it should do. "Let him," he says, "not be ashamed to perform the

* Principal Lorimer's translation of Lechler's *John Wyclif and his English Precursors* (London, 1878, 2 vols.,—a valuable work) says he was not cited before the Pope in 1383.

ministry of the Church, since he is, or ought to be, the servant of the servants of God. But a prohibition of reading the Sacred Scriptures, and a vanity of secular dominion, would seem to partake too much of a disposition towards the blasphemous advancement of Anti-Christ."

Thus, like the Wye-Cliff from which his name is probably taken, he stood firm, whilst the waters foamed at his feet. It was the will of God that, after all his troubles and dangers, he should die in his bed, like Luther. On the 29th December 1384, he left the pulpit for the Communion table of his church at Lutterworth, and whilst in the sacramental service he fell back into the chair, which is still preserved, and was carried out insensible. Two days he lingered, and as the last day of the old year waned he went to join the goodly fellowship of the prophets, whose spirit he had breathed; the glorious company of the Apostles, whose words he had given afresh to the people; the noble army of martyrs, of whom he had almost become one; and the innumerable company who have served God in their generation, and served their generation by the will of God. "Admirable," says Fuller, "that a hare so often hunted with so many packs of dogs, should die quietly at last." It certainly was remarkable. Too many Reformers have been, like Milo,

> "wedged in the timber which they strove to rend,"

and he lived in times of persecution. But, if he died in peace, his body was not to remain undisturbed. About a generation afterwards, the Council of Constance, the same that burned John Huss, ordered his corpse to be disinterred. His bones were taken up and thrown over a bridge into the little river Swift; the Swift conveyed them to the Avon, the Avon to the Severn, the Severn into the narrow seas, and they into the main ocean; and thus, in Fuller's oft quoted words, "the ashes of Wyclif are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over."

The sacrilegious work was performed, long after the

order had been given, by Fleming, Bishop of Lincoln, who had been one of Wyclif's coadjutors in earlier days, and who was afterwards smitten with a cruel death.*

But, for a time, the new doctrines had great power amongst all classes. The translation was finished the year before Queen Anne came to England from Bohemia, to be Richard II.'s first queen. She loved to read his Bible, and is an important link thus in the succession of spiritual life in Europe, for, on her household being scattered abroad, the Reformer's books fell into the hands of Jerome and Huss, thus preparing the way for Luther. Archbishop Arundel, the persecuting Arundel of later times, encouraged the queen in every way at first. "Against them that say the Gospel in English would make men err," he said, "do they know that in the Latin are more heretics than of all others? Sixty Latin heretics! but God forbid that any language should be hated for heresy." No doubt a few of the Lollard preachers gave some occasion to their enemies to confound them with the promoters of insurrection and lawlessness, and, through these black sheep, this same Arundel, in a Convocation at Oxford, prohibited the reading of "any book, pamphlet, or treatise, now lately composed—in the time of John Wyclif or since . . . upon pain of greater excommunication, until the said Translation be approved by the Ordinary of the place."

Our own Henry IV., indeed, as well as Queen Anne of Bohemia, was supposed to have imbibed the new doctrines, previously to his possession of the throne—being the son of John of Gaunt, Wyclif's great patron. As soon as that came about, however, he sought the favour of the clergy, and a law was enacted that any heretic who refused to abjure his opinions, or relapsed, should be burned; William Sautre, a London clergyman, soon suffering under the Act. It is certain that Wyclif's work at first influenced the higher classes in the country as well as the mass of the people, as we have seen. Foxe tells us that some gave five marks

* A compendious old treatise. Arber's Reprints.

for a New Testament. This was equivalent to about £40 now, the yearly stipend for a curate, according to Hallam. Some gave a load of hay for a few chapters.

Certainly, Wyclif was a very pronounced lover of his kind, and his followers soon began to feel that all men

THE LOLLARDS' PRISON, LAMBETH PALACE. (*From Allen's "History of Lambeth."*)

were brothers. The serf, who was the lowest point of the feudal system, learnt to sing—

> "When Adam delved, and Eve span,
> Who was then the gentleman?"

and the oppression which had characterised former periods became impossible.

The followers of Wyclif were called Lollards probably from an old verb "lollen," to sing, every such movement of freedom finding some expression in music. Froude, however, gives the preference to "lolium," as they were supposedly the tares in the corn of Catholicism. Langlande, in his *Piers Plowman*, plays on the analogy of the word to "loller," or idler, and so easily returns it to the Friars. Chaucer's idea of it, and his good feeling towards those

who bore it, are both clear. He looks upon it as derived from "lolium." When the host swears, in asking the parson for a tale, he is gently rebuked. "I smell a loller in the wind," quoth he—"this loller here will preach somewhat;" and the shipman who stops him by interposing a tale, says of the good town parson—

> "he would sow some difficulty
> Or springing cockle in our clean corn."*

Yet another interpretation is given in the *Commentary of the Foundation of Balliol College*, Oxford, where it is said to be a corruption of "low lords," or levellers. Certainly, the word came to mean heretic, and was a term of reproach to the opponents of Popery amongst the Bohemians, the Germans, the Swiss, and the Piedmontese. Knighton says that here they multiplied like suckers growing from the root of a tree, so that of two men whom you met on the road one was sure to be a Lollard. "Let me make the ballads of a nation, and I care not who makes the laws"—this is an exaggerated saying, which would look for one of its strongest confirmations to the time following Wyclif's death. Men needed to sing when they had so much to encounter, and they could sing when they felt they were right in spite of it all. For the most part, Lollardism was a struggle at the greatest disadvantage of a true desire after holiness, fed and strengthened by God's Word, against the learning and culture of the time. Our Lord rejoiced that, in a like case, it pleased the Father to reveal His truth to babes rather than to the wise and prudent.†

Of course the principles of liberty were immediately dangerous, as Luther's preaching was the incidental cause of the Peasants' War in Germany, however much he might protest against it. John Ball, for instance, of Kent, would harangue his neighbours in this fashion :—

"Ah, ye good people, matters go not well to pass in England, nor shall do till we all be united together. Why

* *English Religion*, Henry Morley.
† A proper dyalogue. Arber's Reprints.

should we be kept thus in bondage! We be called bondsmen, and without we do our service willingly we be beaten. Let us to the King, to the intent we be made free, and when the King seeth us we shall have some remedy, either by fairness or otherwise."

They demanded that, if they laboured for the Lords, they should be paid wages for it (*sic*), and that power began to assert itself which, in the shape of Parliament, should surely though gradually fight their battles, and bring to an end their slavery. The Wat Tyler insurrection, which was only indeed the growth of these new feelings in part, was put down, but the feelings themselves could not be, and they have blossomed into the freest and securest government which has lasted before the world. Jack Straw came a little later, and he too perished from the way when the wrath of the sober-minded was kindled but a little. His movement can only be connected with the new doctrines in a very small degree. According to his statement before execution, the design of his insurgents was to exterminate all "possessioners"—the only ecclesiastics to be spared being, not Wyclif's poor priests, but the begging Friars.

We are slow to learn that "strife is the father of all," and that incidental evil will be found wherever much good is accomplished. So even Christ spoke of His having come to bring a sword, though He would not even suffer one to be used in His own self-defence. And if the Scriptures were abused, it was not for the want of some very plain speaking on the part of Wyclif and his followers. For instance, here is an extract, illustrating the plain dealing of the "Door of Holy Scripture," already referred to :—

"Alas, what do proud, stiff-necked, covetous wretches with Holy Scriptures! They deceive themselves and the people that think they be wise when they appear to be very foolish, and so cause themselves to be deeper damned, and others also that follow their folly, and blaspheme God. These worldly fools should know that a good life is a lantern to bring a man to the very truth

and knowledge. As Chrysostom writeth, the fear and love of God is the beginning of all perfection and wisdom. When these fleshly apes and worldly moldewarps have not desired the beginning of wisdom, what do they with Holy Scripture but to the hurting of themselves and other men! For, as long as pride and covetousness of worldly goods and honour is rooted in their hearts, they do their alms to the devil, and offer to him both body and soul."

However, Arundel and others grew determined to root out what they called heresy, although it had become so general that, when he began to adopt his measures in Oxford, he was told that nearly all the colleges were infected with "heretical pravity." Shortly afterwards, Wyclif's Tracts, such as had belonged to Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, were seized in Paternoster Row and taken to Henry v. at Kennington Palace, who, after reading a few pages of them, expressed his horror at their contents. Cobham, though a baron of the greatest influence, was tried as a heretic, condemned, and finally burnt, crying out: "Lo, good people, for the breaking of God's Law they never yet cursed me; but, for their own laws and traditions most cruelly do they handle both me and other men. And therefore both they and their laws, by the promise of God, shall be utterly destroyed." *

Arundel died in 1413. He had done all he could to restrict preaching among the lower orders of the clergy, there being scarcely any amongst the higher to restrict.

There was no man in England burnt for "heresy" for ages, till he was the adviser of Sautre's death, and then of others. Queen Anne of Bohemia exercised influence over such as were inclined to persecute, as long as she lived, and Arundel, in preaching her funeral sermon, in 1394, praised her knowledge of the Scriptures in English, though a foreigner. It was her mother-in-law also that interfered on Wyclif's behalf when he was cited at Lambeth. However, Arundel became another man, and when he died, after re-lighting the fires of persecution,

* *History of Political Literature*, Blakey.

he had a swelling of the tongue, and men said that God had tied his tongue for having tied the tongues of almost all preachers, because some few pulpits had given utterance to "heretical teaching."

The first Act of the wretched, persecuting Parliament was a very severe statute against the readers of Wyclif's learning, as the Bible was then called. This Act said that, whoever read the Scriptures in English, should forfeit land, cattle, goods, and life, and be condemned as heretics to God, enemies to the Crown, and traitors to the Kingdom; that they should not have the benefits of sanctuary, though this was a privilege granted then to notorious malefactors; and that, if they continued obstinate, or relapsed after pardon, they should first be hanged for treason against the king, and then burned for heresy. The clergy were getting afraid of their revenues; but the storm broke out against their pride and riches in this very Parliament, and the king was put in mind of what he had before desired relative to converting some of the lands and possessions of the clergy to the service of the State. "The Bill to this effect," says Hall, "made the fat Abbots to sweat, the proud Abbots to frown, the poor Priors to curse, the silly nuns to weep, and indeed all her merchants to fear that Babel would down." Mainly, however, through the influence of Chicheley, Archbishop of Canterbury, the king was diverted to the war with France.*

The persecutions went on, however. When blood is tasted, the appetite seems to increase, and only thus can we understand the treatment of Reginald Pecock. He wrote a book called the *Repressor of Overmuch Blaming of the Clergy*, which was a direct though courteous attack on the Lollards and their views. In this production he showed great vigour and liberality of sentiment, together with much learning, although he comes forward as the partial defender of images and pilgrimages, the invocation of the saints, and of the Friars as a well-governed body of men. The Lollards had, in some cases, carried their

* *Parliamentary History*, Cobbett.

reverence for Scripture too far, and Pecock calls upon them to regard the inward Scripture of God's Law, written by Himself on man's soul, as well as the outward writings of the Old and New Testaments. He smiles at the over-strained notion of the sufficiency of Scripture which had become common, and says it would be puzzling to show that ale and beer might be used lawfully on such principles, wine being always mentioned.

Wyclif had said that human ordinances were to be accepted when they were founded on good reason, and were for the common profit of Christian people, but these "righteous overmuch" followers said that nothing was lawful unless it were appointed in the Scriptures, by which we were to be absolutely guided, even in things indifferent.

It is certainly surprising that a man who could thus come forward as the champion of his Order, he being Bishop of Chichester, should be put upon his trial and forced to recant or die. Such is nevertheless the fact, for, after a long examination, the archbishop summed up by calling him a heretic blinded by the light of his own understanding, and, quoting Jerome and Grosseteste on the province of the Church to interpret Scripture, offered him the choice between a public abjuration and death. Pecock stood for a few moments in motionless silence, and then agreed to abjure. Though a bishop, he found that the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. He was brought, in his episcopal habit, to St. Paul's, and in the presence of twenty thousand people gave up his writings to be burnt and then read his abjuration, in which he required all persons "as they tendered their souls and his, to deliver in all writings of his which they might have in their keeping, that the same might be openly burnt as an example and terror to others." He was then sent to confinement in Thorney Abbey, where no one was allowed to speak to him but the person who made his bed and fire, and where he was allowed no books except a Mass Book, a Psalter, a Legendary, and a Bible.

Of course it was a Latin Bible, but the English ones were multiplied far and wide, and the light could not be alto-

WYCLIF'S MONUMENT.

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF

JOHN WICLIF,

THE EARLIEST CHAMPION OF ECCLESIASTICAL REFORMATION IN ENGLAND.

HE WAS BORN IN YORKSHIRE IN THE YEAR 1324.
IN THE YEAR 1375 HE WAS PRESENTED TO THE RECTORY OF LUTTERWORTH:
WHERE HE DIED ON THE 31ST OF DECEMBER 1384.

AT OXFORD HE ACQUIRED NOT ONLY THE RENOWN OF A CONSUMMATE SCHOOLMAN,
BUT THE FAR MORE GLORIOUS TITLE OF THE EVANGELIC DOCTOR.

HIS WHOLE LIFE WAS ONE PERPETUAL STRUGGLE AGAINST THE CORRUPTIONS
AND ENCROACHMENTS OF THE PAPAL COURT,
AND THE IMPOSTURES OF ITS DEVOTED AUXILIARIES, THE MENDICANT FRATERNITIES.

HIS LABOURS IN THE CAUSE OF SCRIPTURAL TRUTH WERE CROWNED BY ONE IMMORTAL
ACHIEVEMENT, HIS TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE INTO THE ENGLISH TONGUE.

THIS MIGHTY WORK DREW ON HIM, INDEED, THE BITTER HATRED
OF ALL WHO WERE MAKING MERCHANDIZE OF THE POPULAR CREDULITY AND IGNORANCE.

BUT HE FOUND AN ABUNDANT REWARD IN THE BLESSINGS OF HIS COUNTRYMAN OF EVERY
RANK AND AGE, TO WHOM HE UNFOLDED THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE.

HIS MORTAL REMAINS WERE INTERRED NEAR THIS SPOT; BUT THEY WERE NOT
ALLOWED TO REST IN PEACE. AFTER THE LAPSE OF MANY YEARS, HIS BONES WERE
DRAGGED FROM THE GRAVE, AND CONSIGNED TO THE FLAMES: AND HIS ASHES
WERE CAST INTO THE WATERS OF THE ADJOINING STREAM.

INSCRIPTION ON WYCLIF'S MONUMENT.

gether hid. There still exist one hundred and seventy copies, more or less complete, and nearly half are of a small size, such as could be used for household reading. Five hundred and four pounds has been given lately for one of these, written on vellum, but they were far more valuable in reality when first written. Now they are curiosities, for the rich to show their friends, and the learned occasionally to consult; then they were the bread of life to a hungry people, when the famine was sore in the land.

Soon, however, Gutenberg was to come, with his printing press, and now on the very spot in London where the Council met which was interrupted by an earthquake, there stands the house of the British and Foreign Bible Society, which yearly prints the Word of God by the million. The Wyclif Society has also been formed (March 1882) to do honour to his memory, and to publish his works.

Literature.—There are many editions of Wyclif's English works. The New Testament is in Bagster's *Hexapla*, London 1841; in Lea Wilson's quarto, 1848; and in W. W. Skeat's 1879 edition. The whole Bible was splendidly printed by Forshall and Madden in 1850, in 4 vols. Dr. A. Clarke printed the Song of Solomon in his Commentary in 1810. Mr. Skeat has also published Job, the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon, as revised by Purvey in 1881. The English works of Wyclif were edited by F. D. Matthew for the Early English Text Society, and published by Trübner in 1880. Mr. Thomas Arnold also, son of Dr. Arnold of Rugby, published his "Select English Works," in which he says that there are sixty-five known English works and ninety-six in Latin. It is these latter that the Wyclif Society is now publishing. This Society was founded by the energetic Mr. F. J. Furnivall, Professor Montague Burrows, F. D. Matthew, and others, and they say, "It is much to be wished that the five hundreth anniversary of Wyclif's death should find English and Germans engaged

in the joint work of raising a memorial to this vigorous Teutonic mind; a monument more beautiful and durable than marble or bronze, not formed of lifeless stone, but moulded in his own living words of evangelical faith, of manly frankness, and patriotic highmindedness."

The wish was realised, and the Quincentenary saw plenty of honour done to the great Reformer throughout the English-speaking world. Rudolph Buddensieg (Lic. Theol. Leipsic) edited the Polemical Works for the Wyclif Society, published by Trübner in 1883. He quotes the comforting sentence from Ranke: "It very often happens that efforts which seem to have perished with those who made them exercise a more enduring influence upon subsequent events than the conqueror who prematurely triumphs." W. Waddington Shirley also has proved himself not only an able editor of Wyclif, but has pointed out very clearly to his Alma Mater what a debt of gratitude she owes him. He was Professor of Ecclesiastical History, and Canon of Christ Church, Oxford, and died in 1866. Lechler also has published Wyclif's Trialogus, and there are a number of valuable Lives, including his own, translated by Professor Lorimer, and Dr. R. Vaughan's. The Wyclif Society has a good deal of work before it. There are nearly 40 vols. in Vienna,* consisting either entirely or chiefly of unprinted Latin works by Wyclif, of which, in some instances, not a copy is to be found in England. Owing to the secularisation of the Bohemian monasteries under Joseph II., they are now to be found there, and are evidence of the pedigree of the Hussite movement. It was in fact "Wycliffism" pure and simple, the three ancient medallions illustrating it, in which Wyclif is striking sparks out of a stone, Huss setting fire to the coals, and Luther bearing a torch.

Milton has said indeed: "If the stiff-necked obduracy of our Prelates had not obstructed Wyclif's sublime and exalted spirit, the names of the Bohemians, Huss and Hieronymus, and even of Luther and Calvin, would at this

* In the Imperial and Royal Library. There are also several in the University Library at Prague.

day have been buried in obscurity, and the glory of having reformed our neighbours would have been ours alone."

Recent valuable contributions to the subject have also been made by the Rev. Herbert B. Workman, M.A., the Rev. W. L. Watkinson, and many others, the Wyclif Literature being one of the largest in our own or any country.

If any mind has been disturbed by Dr. Gasquet's strange theories, to which we have already referred, an answer to them will be found in the *English Historical Review* for 1895. It is the inferences on Dr. Gasquet's part that are misleading. He cannot explain away Knighton, though he airily dismisses John Huss. Arundel clearly ascribes the work of Translation to Wyclif, and all tradition has placed him at the head of the little band of Translators. Mr. F. D. Matthew completely deals with Dr. Gasquet's arguments, if anyone wishes to pursue the matter further. He gives three instances in which Wyclif advocates having the Scriptures in the Vernacular, and there is another in *De Officio Pastorali*. Wyclif's statements also about the activity of the Friars against the Bible are explicit.

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